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WALSH'S SERMONS.

LONDON:

GAULTER, Printer, Lovell's-Court, Paternoster-Row.





J. Shury Sc.

MR. THO. WALSH.

SERMONS

BY THE

REV. THOMAS WALSH.

“Ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with his father, he hath served with me in the Gospel.

“Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.”
(Phil. ii.)

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON :

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PREFACE.

THE following Discourses of Mr. Walsh are some of the first free pourings out of his heart on divine subjects. They were written in the early days of his public life; and are the natural flow of a mind at that time little cultivated by art, but deeply touched by the finger of God. Had he either revised them with a view to their amendment, or written on the subjects of which they treat in the time of his later labours, and more advanced learning and experience, they would, no doubt, have had in them a depth and accuracy very unusual in so early productions; such as was universally observed in his discourses, particularly during the two last years of his preaching.

The course of his public labours was not in all above eight or nine years; and it does not appear that for the last three or four of them he wrote so much as a single sermon; although his acquaintance with God and skill in letters were well known to be then considerable,—far beyond what could well be expected from his years and

opportunities. But what is not possible to inclination and industry?

There is reason to think he never intended that these discourses should be made public. Having first preached them extempore, he afterwards committed them in haste to writing, threw them by among his other papers, and took no farther notice of them. After his decease, the memory of him being still precious to many, and calling to mind the great benefit his preaching had been of to their souls, they desired to have as many of his sermons in their hands as could possibly be procured; which, together with the consideration of the good it pleased God to do by his plain nervous preaching in general, have prevailed for their publication.

Indeed, the Discourses of Mr. Walsh, known any other way than as proceeding immediately out of his own lips, lose a main part of their excellence. Accuracy of composition, elegance of style, and the niceties of human oratory, were the least of his care, and had little share of his attention either in speaking or writing: they are, therefore, not to be sought for here. When he spoke in public, it was for God and the advantage of souls alone; and when he wrote his thoughts on religious subjects, the fervency and ardour of his spirit, and the rapid flow of his soul on such occasions, carried him on with "the pen of a ready writer," to such a degree, as made him utterly regardless of the exact-

ness required in writings intended for the public view.

The word of the Lord dwelling richly in him, and a heart ever burning with love to God, and zeal for the salvation of his neighbour, rendered his public speaking both affecting and fruitful; being urged home upon the conscience of his hearers by his awakening and forcible manner of address. It conveyed thus, to attentive hearts, a certain light, savour, and sensibility, which far surpass all the power of human wisdom, and the charms of eloquence. He spoke from a mind deeply penetrated with invisible realities, the great things of another world; and for the most part, in the very words of the Holy Ghost, as contained in the Holy Scriptures.

In his speaking of heavenly things, one may in truth discern the difference there is between a preacher formed gradually by the hand of God, in retirement, fasting, and prayer, after many inward conflicts, and those who are appointed in haste by men, from mere human motives,—who have little other school than the world, no higher master than themselves, and no other preparation than bare human studies, interrupted by worldly conversation, diversions, play, good cheer, and the like.

It is, however, easily foreseen that to such as were well acquainted with his manner of preaching, these sermons, in print, will appear far below the ideas which are still retained of him as a

preacher. But let them remember the well-known difference there is between extemporaneous discourses, first delivered with life and fervour, and afterwards read, often with cold indifference. Who ever (if the speaker at all understood and felt what he said) has not found himself disappointed of his expectation in this particular? And let the degree of this difference be remembered in the discourses of different men. Sermons at second-hand, indeed, at best resemble, in some sort, milk whose cream is taken off. And yet, this notwithstanding, it is presumed, there remains in these, in their present state, so much of the spirit and unction which accompanied the preaching of that man of God in general, as will be evidenced to every unprejudiced reader.

Persons of experience and discernment perceive a very remarkable difference in the writings of different men, with respect to the spirit and tendency of them; although the matter and expression may be nearly alike: arising, no doubt, from the different spring whence they proceed,—the heart, or the head; one's own experience, or the experience and sentiments of others; the teaching of the Holy Ghost, or the teaching of men.

Those discourses and writings which proceed from an experienced heart, anointed with the divine unction, convey, as it were insensibly, at least something of the like kind, to souls prepared

to receive it: whereas, on the other hand, such discourses and books as are the result of mere human skill or learning, notwithstanding the truth and beauty of them be never so clear, and may afford us pleasure, yet they leave our heart generally as they found it. And, perhaps, to the same cause may be ascribed the transient, or continued use which we find from books. Some we can read with still-renewed pleasure and advantage; while others, whose matter and expression are not at all inferior, we are weary of after a first or second reading. This difference is remarkably observable between the well known book (to instance in one) of "The Imitation of Jesus Christ," and a thousand other tracts on religion.

O yes! We must needs be very sensible of those writings that inflame our heart, and nourish it; which is always preferable to what strikes the understanding, and fills it with mere images and ideas. These often consume the heart instead of feeding it; and fill the mind with barren speculations, which rather darken and perplex, than promote our true "inward life," or lead us on in the purity of an holy conversation.

Indeed, when we consider, on the one hand, the number of well-written and elaborate discourses (sermons in particular) with which the world abounds, and yet the little real good which is done by them, either to those who hear or those who read them; and, on the other hand, the suc-

cess which it pleaseth God to give to the artless and unadorned discourses, of comparatively ignorant and unlearned men; when this is considered, one can hardly avoid thinking but meanly of that "excellency of speech and of wisdom" which the world so much admires, even in recommending the Gospel of Christ; and preferring to it, that "foolishness of preaching," (so reputed of the world,) by which it pleaseth God "to save them that believe."

The thoughts and ways of God are very different from the thoughts and ways of men. Many things which we esteem weak or silly, are reputed of him both wise and holy; and so on the contrary. So doth He, by the weak things of the world, confound the things that are mighty; and by foolish things of the world, confound the wise; yea, by base things of the world, and things which are despised, and things which are not, doth God bring to nought the things that are, that no flesh may glory in his presence; that whatever good is done upon the earth, it may be known the Lord doeth it himself and that, according as it is written, "he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." (Jer. ix. 24; 1 Cor. i. 27—31.)

These considerations have had influence, not only towards the making these discourses public, but have likewise prevented seeking after such decorations and embellishments as might give them the dress of modern elegance and delicacy.

Some few alterations and enlargements, it may be acknowledged, have been made in them; but they are such, as neither alter the sense of the writer, nor advance any thing different from his design, throughout the whole. They are, for the most part, such only as the time and circumstances in which they were written rendered necessary to clear and fix the sense.

The matter and spirit of them are chiefly to be regarded; and in this view, the children of God, or those who are seeking to be such, it is hoped will find their account in them. As for such as read only to find fault, or pass a judgment upon the writer or publisher, it is judged needless to say anything to bespeak their favour. "Neither friendship nor power, interest nor favour, can give those defences to a book which it needs. Besides, men's judgments are more different than their faces. Every man has a face, but every man has not an understanding. And people with their understanding, or with their no-understanding, give their judgment upon books, not only before they read all, but often before they read three pages; receiving their information from humour or affection, interest or dislike, chance or mistake; from him that reads with prejudice, if not malice, or from him that reads after dinner."

In short, if you have been acquainted with the preaching of Mr. Walsh, these sermons will bring to your remembrance "that spirit of zeal and

fervour which he breathed every where; that constant use he made of Scripture, in which he was 'mighty;' and that number of strong and short sentences which he poured as so many darts upon his hearers, and whereby he forced them to fly to the 'city of refuge,' as a thick shower forces loitering travellers to run for shelter.

"If you never heard that 'preacher of righteousness,' let not the abruptness of his style, the bold simplicity, and the abundance of his thoughts, find in you a severe judge and a nice critic. Mind the matter more than the manner; and be kind enough to make allowance for the freedom of discourses written down (one or two of them in particular) at the request of friends, and never intended by the author to be made public."

It is hoped and prayed, that at least some degree of the spiritual fervour which glowed in his own heart, both at the preaching and writing them, may yet inflame the souls of others with the same heavenly love and zeal. They are sent into the world with a view to promote, in some measure, the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. And if any service be done by them for God's glory, any assistance ministered to the soul of only a child or any ignorant woman, the publisher's end will then be answered; and it is hoped our Lord will accept them.

Let us beseech the God of all grace to conduct us all, and teach us to profit proportionably

to the many helps and assistances he is graciously pleased to afford us for our furtherance in solid piety and true holiness of living. Our Lord hath fully done, and is yet continually doing, his part: let us do ours. Let us "follow the Lamb;" and labour to be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless!

JAMES MORGAN.

London,
Nov. 15, 1763.

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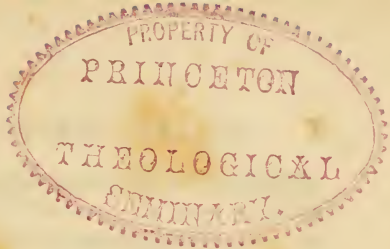
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THE FALL AND RECOVERY OF
SINNERS.

DISCOURSE I.

HOSEA XIII. 9.

“O ISRAEL, THOU HAST DESTROYED THYSELF; BUT
IN ME IS THY HELP.”

“God,” saith Solomon, “hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions,” and have thus corrupted themselves; so that all men are become guilty and abominable before God. And should he enter into judgment with them, no man living could be justified in his sight: “the Scripture hath” therefore “concluded all under sin,” (Gal. iii. 22; Rom. iii. 9,) and declares, “There is none righteous, no, not one.” We have “all sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” To the same purpose are the words of the text, “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself!”

In discoursing on these words, I shall show,

- I. That all men have destroyed themselves by sin.
- II. That our only help and salvation is in Christ.

I. That all men have destroyed themselves by sin, is clear from the Law and the Prophets, as well as from our own observation and experience.

1. Adam destroyed himself, through rebellion and unbelief, (so his sin may be called, by way of aggravation,) and he did not fall and hurt himself alone; "for by" this "one man's disobedience, many," i. e., *all*, "were made sinners;" constituted guilty, and liable to eternal death. (Rom. v.) He was *caput gentis*, a common head to all mankind. Even as Levi, who was not in being till many hundred years after Abraham, is nevertheless said to have paid tithes in or through him. (Heb. vii. 9.) So we, the children and offspring of Adam, have all sinned in him: he, virtually representing and containing in himself his whole posterity.

Thus, with regard to original sin, *all* are destroyed! There is none, no, not a single instance, excepted. As is the tree, such must be the fruit: and as the root corrupted itself, the branches, of necessity, partake of the infection; and thus "all the world is become guilty before God," because all are born in sin.

2. But have we not likewise destroyed ourselves by actual sin? Have we not added sin to sin? May not man be said to be "twice dead," and "altogether become unprofitable?" Does not an Apostle say, that whosoever sayeth he hath not sinned is a liar, and that God's word is not in him? (1 John i. 10.) Yes, every soul that ever lived to distinguish sin from righteousness has so sinned as to render itself obnoxious to eternal fire. For every transgression of the law deserves punishment; and the Scripture reprobates

as guilty of all, those who offend but in one single point.

To put the matter in the clearest and most distinct light we can. Let us descend to particulars; and we shall see, from the Word of God, that man has destroyed himself; is in a ruined and wretched state, both as to his soul and body. Consider him with regard to,

1. His *understanding*. How is this leading power of the soul destroyed! Hear what one of the Prophets saith: “The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib; but Israel doth not know,”—is, in this respect, inferior to the very beasts of the field,—“my people do not consider.” The prophet Jeremiah has nearly the same affecting language with Isaiah: “The stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of their God.” Man does not know the God that made him; “having,” saith St. Paul, “the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them.” (Eph. iv. 18.)

When the Almighty breathed the breath of life into man, then did the pure light of God spring up in his mind. He saw clearly his Father and his God; he knew the will, and understood the works, of his Maker; there was no darkness at all in him. His understanding was strong and comprehensive; he had clear ideas of the nature of all things, as far as they were knowable by a human mind; and hence he gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field. “And whatsoever Adam

called every living creature, that was the name thereof." And these names were expressive of their nature and properties. Man was in this respect also made in the image of God. The light and wisdom of his Creator were richly poured into his soul. He was wise, holy, happy. Yes,

“ Perfect at first, and blest his state,
Man in his Maker's image shone,
In innocence divinely great
He lived, he lived to God alone :
His heart was love, his pulse was praise,
And light and glory deck'd his face ! ”

But, alas, how have we destroyed ourselves ! How dark, how ignorant both of God and himself, is poor, fallen man at present ! His silver is become dross ; his wine mixed with water ! O how are the mighty fallen ! In this our degenerate state, we know nothing as we ought to know. Blindness and error of every kind have overspread the face of our soul. We worship an unknown God, and bow down to idols of our own making. God is heard of only by the hearing of the ear ; but our hearts perceive him not. Man has no longer those pure and intellectual eyes, to search into the depths of God's wisdom and goodness, or discern the designs of his love and mercy towards him. He can account for nothing ; he does not understand what is meant by either holiness or happiness. “ The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ; ” nay, “ they are foolishness to him ; because they are spiritually discerned. ” In short, it would be absurd to suppose that so blind, ignorant, (I speak of him with reference to the things of God,) inconsistent, fickle, wicked, unholy, and unhappy a

creature as man is, in his present state, could possibly be the immediate work of a God of consummate purity, goodness, and perfection. The truth is, man has destroyed himself. We are, in this respect,

“ By vice new-cast, and creatures of our own.”

2. With regard to our *will*. How is the rectitude and orderly state of this faculty of the soul destroyed! Man is not only ignorant, but wicked also. He has lost both his wisdom and holiness. At first, his will was holy; conformed in all things to the will of his Creator. There was no sin, no stain of sin, to be found in him. The goodness of God was richly communicated to him, and the love of God filled his whole soul. Free from perverseness or rebellion, to please God in all things was his desire, his delight, and happiness. But now, alas! the will or heart of man “ is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” (Jer. xvii. 9.) His “ carnal mind is enmity against God.” (Rom. viii. 7.) He resists the motions and admonitions of God’s Holy Spirit. He fears not his threatenings; breaks his commandments; exalts his will against the will of God; and says, in effect, in a thousand instances, “ What or who is the Lord, that I should regard him?” Man’s pride and passion will know no superior. These so govern him, that all moral and divine restraints are rejected by him. He breaks the cords of discipline, and casts away the bands of obedience from him. Sin has separated him from his God. (Isa. lix. 2.) Sin has transformed him into the image of the devil; insomuch that sinners hate, yea, in effect, curse God in their hearts. “ The fool,” that is, the sinner, “ saith in his heart, There is

no God." The seed of the serpent so powerfully rules in the will of fallen man, that it is pregnant with all wickedness. (Mark vii. 22, 23.) So that he may be said to be the most miserable, rebellious, impure, and unhappy creature in the whole creation. Lord, what is man ! poor man, that has thus destroyed himself !

3. The *conscience* is likewise defiled. Its primitive state and offices are in great measure destroyed. It is, saith St. Paul, seared as with a hot iron. So that men sin, often without fear or regret. The light that was in him is turned to darkness ; and, alas, how great is that darkness ! At first, the law of God was written in man's heart ; and conscience, as God's vicegerent within, admonished him continually. It was, on the part of God, a witness within the breast of man, which constantly executed its proper office ; but now it is, in many instances, *past feeling*. So that sinners are so far from taking shame to themselves on the commission of evil, that they often glory in their sin ; setting their faces, as it were, against the heavens, and striving with their Maker. Man rusheth into sin and danger as a horse rusheth into the battle ; his hard, impenitent, and stupified conscience being lulled asleep, or quite misguided by the devil.

4. And as to our very memory. This also has shared in the general destruction which man has brought upon himself. Now God is not in all his thoughts ; but quite the contrary. Man, indeed, can retain in memory things which do not profit, but rather greatly hurt him. He can retain idle songs, obscene sentiments, and a variety of occasions of sin and misery. But what he hears concerning his duty towards God

and his neighbour is soon forgotten by him, and easily slips out of his mind. He can tell you, it may be, of wars, sieges, conquerors, fables, and foreigners, with great exactness; and, at the same time, is so inattentive to the things of religion, as not to know or remember so much, as in what part of the Bible our Lord's sermon on the mount is contained; but much less, what that sermon contains. In the state of innocence, man treasured up, as the most invaluable treasure he could possess, the words of his God, and whatsoever related to his doing in the best manner His most holy will. But now he forgets God days without number; he does not like to retain God in his knowledge; he forsakes and forgets the only fountain of happiness, and refuses to return! O sinner, how hast thou, in this particular also, destroyed thy poor soul!

5. Were we to attend particularly to the *passions* and *affections* of man's soul, we should find them equally depraved. Now he loves the creature more than the Creator. His affections are placed on things on the earth; he loves the present world, and the love of the Father is not in him. He does not delight himself in God: no, his glorying is in the flesh; nor is the fear of the Lord before his eyes. He only hopes or fears evil or good below. The general bent of his desires rove hither and thither, and are seldom at one stay. They are not to the Lord, nor to the remembrance of his name. But quite the contrary;

“ Scatter'd o'er all the earth abroad,
Immeasurably far from God!”

6. In a word, man has destroyed himself with

respect to *happiness*. He has deprived himself of, forfeited his right to, the bliss and glory of heaven. He has shut the gates of Paradise against his own soul, and has in every respect disqualified himself for communion with God. In strict justice, he has no right to a drop of water to cool his tongue. He has moreover rendered himself obnoxious to the vengeance of eternal fire. He has destroyed his body and soul, by rendering both fit for hell. How justly then may it be said, O man, thou hast undone, thou hast destroyed thyself! thy whole head is sick, and thy whole heart is faint! There is no sound part in us; but from the crown of the head, to the sole of the feet, there is nought but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores.

7. Lastly, as to our *body*. This likewise is, in the sense of the text, destroyed. It is subject to sickness and pain; a tottering house of clay, subject to numberless infirmities. It must shortly return to dust, and the fashion thereof shall pass away.

If you have given attention to the things that have been spoken concerning the fall and destruction of man, you cannot marvel that we “must be born again;”—that except we are converted, we cannot see the kingdom of God.

II. I proceed, in the second place, to consider, that in Christ is our help. “In me is thy help,” saith the Lord.

“There is no name,” that is, way or means, “under heaven, whereby we can be saved,” but the name of the Lord Jesus. (Acts iv. 12.) He is “the way, the truth, and the life;” and no man can come to the Father but through him. He “is made of God unto

us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”

But we must be particular here also, and consider separately, how it is that in the Lord Christ is our help, that is, salvation;—how he repairs our breaches, and redresses our grievances. It avails but little to discover our sin and misery, unless we find out a remedy to heal and help us. Now, in order to this, let us weigh, with great attention, the fifth chapter to the Romans, where the Apostle draws a parallel, making a comparison between Adam and Christ. He shows at large, that we are restored by Christ, as we were destroyed by Adam. He calls Adam “the figure of Him that was to come,” (ver. 14,) that is, of Christ, who is a second head and root to all mankind, and is therefore called the *second Adam*. He is the Fountain of righteousness, holiness, and happiness to all believers, (who are the seed of Christ,) even as the first Adam was the source of sin, misery, corruption, and condemnation to all his posterity. More particularly,

1. Christ is the true light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world. He is the Sun of Righteousness, and the Day-spring from on high. He shines into our hearts, and sheds light through our understanding. He doth not, indeed, restore that intuitive kind of knowledge which Adam enjoyed, as being not essential to our true happiness; but he shows us all the things that make for our true peace. He removes the veil, and lets us see Him that was before invisible even to our understanding. Christ removes our ignorance of God and of his works. In his light we see light. We see ourselves to be poor,

wretched, helpless sinners, void of all goodness, void of all happiness. He also reveals the fulness of grace that is in himself. He sets before our mind the treasures of his mercy, the all-sufficiency of his righteousness, and the overflowings of his love. And herein the image of God is again restored unto man, being made wise unto salvation, and acquainted with God.

2. Our help is in Christ, as he is the Fountain of Righteousness, to justify and sanctify us. His blood washes our sins; his righteousness covers our naked souls: through faith in his name we are made whole; our sins are forgiven, and our diseases healed. By this means, our will is again brought into subjection to the will of God. The Spirit of Christ takes away our stubbornness and rebellion, and makes us as little children. Our will is thus likewise restored to the image of God. Our hearts are purified by faith. The Spirit of holiness rests upon us, and seals us the children of God. "Lo! I come to do thy will, O God," is now the language of the restored soul: "Yea, thy law is within my heart. Good is thy will, O Lord, and holy are all thy commandments. My delight is in thy word: it is sweet to my soul; it is health to my bones. Here am I: do with me as seemeth thee good."

3. The Lord Jesus is our help, as he restores a good and an enlightened conscience to us. It is his blood that sprinkles our heart from an evil conscience. (Heb. x. 22.) He purges the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God. The witness of God is thus restored within us; and a good conscience is a continual feast. The soul is now sensible of the least

transgression. It feels not only an evil, but an idle *thought*. It severely censures itself for every sin, and warns and excites to universal obedience. This is the rejoicing of the restored or regenerate man, even the testimony of his conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity,—not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God,—he has his conversation in the world.

4. This restoration or help, which we have in Christ, has its influence on the memory likewise. It is strengthened by grace, and made retentive of divine things. We are well assured that Christ helps herein in an especial manner. He sends his Spirit to help our infirmities, and to bring the things of our Lord to our remembrance. He settles in our mind the word of life, the commandments of our God. Now the mind calls to remembrance the goodness of the Lord, and ruminates on all the works of his hands. We look back, and survey the wonders of his love, and the depths of his wisdom and mercy, in the disposals of his providences towards ourselves and mankind in general. We call to remembrance, and treasure up, the excellent sermons, and divine instructions, with which we are or have been privileged, from God's word and messengers. Now we take delight in reading and meditating in the law of God, that we may be skilful in the word of righteousness, and be able to give an account of the hope that is in us.

5. More especially, Christ rectifies and restores our passions and affections. In one sense indeed, these are comprised in the will; yet we speak of them separately, in order to a more full illustration of the point. All the desires of the soul whom Christ thus

helps, are turned towards God. And the general language of the heart is, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, my God? And there is none upon earth I desire in comparison of thee!" The grace of God mightily alters all the powers of the inward man. The divine influences of the Holy Ghost draw our desires to centre in God. Being made spiritual, we seek the things of the Spirit.

(1.) Our fear is restored, by the grace of the Lord Jesus, to its proper state and use. It becomes as a guardian angel, to restrain from sin, yea, from all appearance of evil. Now the man fears God, and therefore need fear nothing but sin beside. (2.) Our hopes become rightly regulated, looking for good things to come,—for such things, the expectation and enjoyment of which make us not ashamed. We wait for the accomplishment of all the great and precious promises. The sole object of our hopes is God, and the things of God. (3.) Love, the noblest passion of our soul, which had once for its object the sordid things of earth, being now changed and sanctified, is fixed on its proper object, heaven and heavenly things. When Christ is become our salvation, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us. Now we begin to experience, how love is the fulfilling of the law, and the end of the commandment; all of which are in order to restore and establish the love of God and man in the soul. To love God with all our heart, and soul, and strength, and to love our neighbour as ourselves, is the sum and substance of all religion, the completion and accomplishment of all the commandments, institutions and ordinances of God. If it was possible for all

other graces to be in the soul, they would not avail without love. (1 Cor. 13.) “Every one that loveth,” and none else, “is born of God, and knoweth God.”

6. As in Adam all died, so in Christ are all made alive. Provision is made for the eternal life of every child of Adam, that will but come to Christ to receive it. The bodies of the saints shall rise, fashioned like unto Christ’s glorious body. They shall be vessels unto honour, meet for the Master’s use. They shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.

7. Lastly, in Christ is our help, as he delivers us from the wrath to come. It is he who has the keys of death and hell, and will suffer none who trust in and serve him in truth, to enter there. He will bring us to his Father’s rest, and put us in possession of heaven and glory!

And thus, “O Israel,” though “thou hast destroyed thyself,” yet “in me is thy help,” saith the Lord.

III. It remains, to make some observations, and to apply the words of the text. And O that the God of all grace may influence all our souls! May he give us hearts to understand, in this our day of grace, the things that belong to our peace!

1. And first, observe, God does not say, O ye Gentiles, ye have destroyed yourselves; (though that is true likewise;) but, “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself!” Ye that are called by my name; that are my peculiar people; even you, by your pride and covetousness, by your rebellion and backslidings, by your vanity and hypocrisy, have destroyed yourselves. And as it was in the old time before us, so it is at this day. As then, all were not of Israel that were called Israel, neither now are all Christians who are

called Christians. Have not the Christians destroyed themselves? Are they not slaves to sin, and enemies to God, even as the Pagans who know not God? O Christians, ye have indeed destroyed yourselves! There is no health in you. Ye eat your own bread, and wear your own apparel; ye follow your own desires, and work iniquity, though you are called after the name of Christ, to take away your reproach. O consider, you that are ignorant, impure, and ungodly, the destruction you have brought already, and still are bringing, upon your souls! O ye that have put God out of your thoughts, whose conscience is asleep; whose hopes and fears are altogether earthly, sensual, and devilish; confess your sins quickly; humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God; abase your souls before him, lest he utterly and eternally destroy you, and that without remedy! Remember there is an O! to it, by way of emphasis and expostulation: "O Israel!" O sinner! O drunkard! O swearer! O sabbath-breaker! O adulterer! O liar! O covetous idolater! O unclean person! O ye intemperate, profane, effeminate! O sinners, of every kind and degree, ye have all, and every one of you, destroyed yourselves. Ye have sold yourselves for nought. You have ruined your souls and bodies; and are, while you thus live in sin, making yourselves fit fuel for everlasting burnings. O Adam, what hast thou done! All thy posterity have followed thy example, and have destroyed themselves, adding sin to sin!

2. Observe, secondly, God saith, "Thou hast destroyed thyself." Man's damnation is of himself. God is just in all his sayings, and will be clear when he is judged. The Almighty has no pleasure in the death of

a sinner. He is clear of their blood. Consider this, ye that charge God foolishly, and say, "The Lord hath done this evil; He fore-ordained man to this condemnation, and decreed to endless misery the greatest part of mankind." O horrid to think! Lord, lay not this folly to their charge; but let those mercies which are over all thy works, extend to these also! O do not err, my beloved brethren! Every good and every perfect gift and blessing indeed descends from God; but he cannot be tempted to evil. Men are tempted when they are drawn aside by their own lust, and so enticed to commit sin. But thou, O Lord, art just in all thy ways, and holy in all thy works. Thou hast no pleasure at all, that the wicked should die. Thou hast ordained no man unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. No:

"No evil can from thee proceed,
 'Tis only suffer'd, not decreed;
 As darkness is not from the sun,
 Nor mount the shades till he is gone."

3. Further, although man has destroyed himself, yet he cannot save himself. He has deserved damnation, because of his sins; but he never can merit salvation by his righteousness. Thus the Apostle speaks: "The wages of sin is death," there is its reward; "but eternal life is the gift of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. vi. 23.) The Lord saith, "In me is thy help." Does not this reprove the self-righteous and the self-sufficient, who imagine they have washed themselves, and are pure from their sins, through their own obedience? O my beloved, "if righteousness came by the law, then Christ died in vain." Some

seek for help in their opinions ; others in their prayers, and tears ; some in their fasting, and giving alms : they go to other physicians : they see no need of Jesus : they are whole ; they are rich, and wise, and holy in their own conceits. But, alas ! could they but see what is in their hearts, they would tremble ; they would not be able to lift up their eyes to heaven ; much less to expect justification by the deeds of the law, the filthy rags of their own righteousness.

The commandment is exceeding broad ; it condemns every wandering and vain thought, even as actual wickedness. It can show no mercy : “ Pay me what thou owest ; pay all,” is the language of the law. It will admit of no coming short ; it makes no manner of allowance ; it requires a continuance in all things that are written therein, from all who seek their help from that quarter. Alas, for the ignorance and folly of sinners, who seek for salvation by the first table ! O God, strip them naked, and convince them that they are altogether an unclean thing ; and that all their righteousness is but as dung and dross before thee !

O ! who among you is wise ? Let him seek for help in Christ. He is the Saviour ; there is no other ; I know not any. “ Their righteousness is of me,” saith the Lord. “ Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth.” Be comforted, sinners ; I bring you glad tidings. Hear the word of the Lord : “ O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself ; but in me is thy help !” Here is comfort for the self-destroyed, disconsolate sinner. O what words of sweetness are these ! What balm to poor, condemned, lost sinners ! Jesus opens his wounded heart to trembling, heavy-laden sinners ! Yea,

“ All the day long he meekly stands
His rebels to receive ;
He shows his side, he spreads his hands,
And bids you turn, and live !

Turn, and your sins of deepest dye
He will with blood efface ;
E'en now he waits his blood to' apply :
Be saved, be saved by grace ! ”

O what love is in the heart of God our Saviour, that he should procure and wait to bestow salvation on the vilest of sinners !

Conceive thou hearest the Lord speaking thus to thee: indeed it is the sense of his holy word, and the voice of his Spirit within us:—“O sinners, ye have destroyed yourselves, by original and by actual sins; you are blind and naked, wretched and helpless; your hearts are hard, your consciences past feeling; your souls are sick unto death! You deserve nought but damnation; you are only fit for hell; your souls and bodies are full of evil diseases, and sin, and misery! And moreover you cannot help yourselves. It is impossible for you ever to help or heal your own souls. All you have ever done, or can or shall do, cannot put away the guilt of any one of your sins, or wash away one single stain of corruption. Now you are justly guilty; and I am just, and able to cast your body and soul into hell-fire, there to be tormented night and day, to all eternity. And this is all your own doing: I am clear of your blood. I have reprov'd and warn'd you; but it was all in vain: you would not listen to my voice, but perversely followed your own will and desires; and therefore are you come into this deplorable situation. Yet, nevertheless, I say

unto thee now, Arise, and wash away thy sins! Awake, O sleeper! No longer rest secure on the brink of endless ruin! Call, call instantly upon thy God! Seek him while he may be found! 'Turn unto me with thy whole heart, and not feignedly,' saith the Lord. Look unto him, whom your sins have pierced, and mourn! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

I cannot conclude without giving an exhortation to you who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and have his salvation, in part, brought into your souls.— I beseech you, my dearly beloved, to labour after growth in grace, and continually to hunger and thirst after righteousness. The will of God is your sanctification: and if you follow on to know him, he will circumcise your hearts to love him; he will purge you, and make you holy before him in love. You shall be "unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight." (Col. i. 22.) Consider, whereunto you are called; even unto all holiness, both of heart and life: to have in you all the mind that was in Christ; to be altogether renewed. Or, as St. Paul speaks, to be transformed into the image of God, from glory to glory! This is the prize of your high calling, thus to partake of a divine nature; even so, that all things within you may become new. I know indeed, the devil, the world, and your own unbelieving hearts will say, "This is impossible; we never can be thus holy and happy, as you say." Nay, my brethren, let God be true, and all these liars. Though it is impossible to nature, it is not to God. Where sin has abounded, grace doth much more abound. We can do all things through Christ strengthening us. If we cannot be

such persons as the word describes, wherefore hath the Lord required these things from us? That he has required we should be pure and perfect, I need give no other proof, but refer you to our Lord's sermon on the mount. And, to confirm that all he spoke that day, should be fulfilled in the hearts and lives of believers, he adds, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock," &c. "And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and keepeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand," &c. You may here observe, that our Saviour calls him a wise man, who heareth and doeth whatsoever things he had said in the foregoing sermon. That is, whosoever is poor in spirit, a mourner after God, has a meek spirit, hungers and thirsts after righteousness, is pure in heart, and a peace-maker; the man that has all these holy tempers, and adds all the outward works of righteousness to them, is wise to salvation, and builds on the rock Christ, gold, silver, and precious stones,—whatsoever things are lovely, or of good report. You likewise observe, that he who comes short of these is a foolish man,—a foolish virgin, who will be shut out of the kingdom of heaven, as wanting the oil of love and joy and peace, as not having the image of God stamped upon the soul. Thus he that breaketh, or neglecteth, or denyeth the least of Christ's commandments, shall be the least in the kingdom of heaven.

Now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace; and beseech the Lord, so to enlighten your minds this day, that, your understanding, will, and affections being sanctified, you may discern and

embrace the things which make for your eternal peace. O may you feel a possession of God within your own souls! May you live to his glory, and die in his favour, and be for ever happy with the Lord!—even with thee, O Jesus! to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be the kingdom, power, and glory, now and for ever! Amen.

HEARKENING TO JESUS.

DISCOURSE II.

MATTHEW XVII. 5.

“HEAR YE HIM.”

1. “THE Lord thy God,” said Moses to the children of Israel, “will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.” (Deut. xviii. 15.) The Lord confirms the words of his servant, and commands all to hearken to his Son; to him who spake as never man spake. Grace was poured into his lips, and dwelt in his heart, without measure. Though our Saviour was in the form of a servant in this world, yet he gave many miraculous and undeniable proofs of his eternal power and Godhead. The context affords us the sacred history of our Lord’s transfiguration, which eminently displayed that he was the Lord from heaven; that Prophet whom we are bound to hear in all things, whatsoever he commands us.

2. In the foregoing chapter he told his disciples

that he "must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed." This greatly affected them; sorrow immediately filled their hearts; and "Peter" (being forward on every occasion) "took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord." But O, how much ignorance and self was in this rebuke! How little did Peter consider, that it behoved Christ to suffer; since otherwise we must have perished everlastingly! But the compassionate Jesus, to comfort and encourage them, "after six days, took Peter, and James, and John his brother, and brought them up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured" (or transformed) "before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." And thus was shown who he was, even the Son of God.

3. Our Lord now manifested a part of the glory which he had with the Father before the world began, sufficient to convince the disciples, that all power in heaven and earth was in his hands; and that therefore his suffering and death, which not long before he mentioned to them, should be voluntary, of his own choice, the effect of infinite love! To confirm the Apostle still more, the Father speaks, as above,

“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; *Hear ye Him!*” Hear him in all things. He is God all-sufficient! **JESUS, JEHOVAH**, over all, blessed for ever! He is wise, and great, and good! He will neither say nor command aught, but what is holy, just, and good. Therefore, “hear ye him!”

4. But Christ is now in heaven: we shall see him no more in his human form (with our bodily eyes) till He appears on “the great white throne” to judge the world in righteousness. How then can we hearken to him? Can we “ascend into heaven, to bring him down from above?”—to hear him utter from his gracious lips the words of eternal life? This need not be: Lo! “the word is nigh thee.” “Whatsoever was written by the holy men of old time, was written for our learning;” and if Christ himself was again to return to earth, he would not alter his speech, or preach any other Gospel than that he has left us. We hear him in his word, in our hearts, and by his ministers. Whoso heareth and receiveth these, hear and receive Christ that sent them.

5. The design of this discourse is, to enforce the divine command, “Hear ye him:” in order to which, I shall speak to four classes of people, and exhort them to hear what Christ in his holy word saith to them; namely,

I. To those who are “dead in trespasses and sins,” and yet are “at ease in Sion.”

II. To those who are of “a poor and contrite spirit, and tremble at God’s word.”

III. To such as have “tasted that the Lord is gracious,” having the “knowledge of salvation, by the remission of their sins.”

IV. To those who "once ran well," but whom "Satan" has "hindered;" that is, backsliders.

I. 1. And, first, I am to speak to those who are "dead in trespasses and sins," and yet are "at ease in Sion." And O that the Almighty would apply his word to your hearts! Take knowledge then, ye sinners against your own souls, that ye are strangers to God, having your understanding darkened, through the blindness of your hearts. Ye are enemies to him, in your mind, and by wicked works. The word of God pronounces concerning all flesh, that we are altogether born in sin, dead and blind, corrupt and abominable; that we are Atheists in the world. "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers," was the word of Christ to the Pharisees, and is still his word to all impenitent sinners. "Woe," saith the Lord, "to them that are at ease in Sion!" "Awake" then, O "thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead!"

2. You are not only ignorant of, and enemies to, God, without righteousness, or holiness; but you are likewise without strength, to help and restore yourselves. As well might "the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots," as you can, of yourselves, "turn" unto the Lord "and live." You are "sick unto death;" yet there is no medicine in thy power, to heal thy sickness; that is, none which thou canst purchase by thy righteousness. You have "nothing to pay." O that you were but sensible of this! You are guilty, and can in no wise vindicate yourself. Could Naaman cure his own leprosy? Could Lazarus raise himself to life? or Bartimeus open his blind eyes? You know they could not: neither can a dead sinner quicken, enlighten, or heal his own soul. Sinner, know this:

and then, O then, take knowledge, that there is help laid upon "one that is mighty!" There is "balm in Gilead;" there is "a Physician there!"

3. Hear the Lord speaking concerning what you deserve: and it is no less than hell-fire:—"The soul that sinneth shall die. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil. He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption."

4. He still further declares, that "except ye repent, ye shall all perish." You have not only deserved damnation, but will surely be damned, unless you cast away your transgressions. You must "kiss the Son," become the friend and favourite of Jesus, else the Father's wrath will consume thee eternally; yea, though it be kindled but a little, "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God."

5. Hear Him calling upon you to repent: "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? Rend your hearts, and not" (that is, rather than) "your garments, and turn to the Lord your God. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

6. Hear the Lord encouraging you: "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Yes, though you are a sinner, a great sinner, a stubborn sin-

ner, an old sinner, having your bones full of the sins of your youth; yea, though thou mayest be a universal sinner, a brand just fit for the burning, yet thy God calleth thee! He encourageth thee, saying, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." *All manner*—O words of greatest mercy, sweetness, and encouragement! *All manner* of uncleanness, idolatry, sabbath-breaking, lying, adultery, fornication: *all manner* of hell-deservingness, shall be forgiven every poor penitent believer in Christ. The blood of Jesus can make thee white as snow.

II. 1. Hear Him, all ye that feel your guilt and misery. His thoughts and words concerning you are all mercy and compassion. "Unto that man will I look, saith the Lord," i. e., him will I regard and relieve, "who is of a contrite spirit, and that trembles at my word." Yes, the Lord healeth those that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. "Blessed are the poor in spirit;" that is, all who feel themselves sinners, who sustain a sore and a heavy burden, and are pained to be delivered; who feel they have nothing to pay, and who esteem their own righteousness as filthy rags; the language of whose heart is, "Lord, we are poor, blind, and needy creatures; we have not so much as a mite towards the ransom of our souls from everlasting perdition; we must be saved by free grace, or perish everlastingly!" Such are the "poor in spirit," whom Christ has pronounced "blessed;" "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Righteousness, and peace, and joy shall fill their hearts; and because they have nothing to pay, he will frankly forgive them all. Their sins shall not be so much as remembered against them.

O ye trembling, burdened, sin-sick souls, the Lord whom ye seek will suddenly come to his temple! The Sun of Righteousness shall arise upon you, with healing in his wings; for surely you fear his name. His salvation is nigh them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land. He will ever be mindful of his covenant. The Lord will break your bonds in sunder. The Son shall make you free, and you shall be free indeed. You shall receive of his fulness, and grace for grace. Jesus Christ came to preach the Gospel to the poor, to bind up the broken in heart, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to comfort all that mourn. They that go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall return with joy, bringing their sheaves with them. They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy. I (saith the Lord) will "appoint unto them that mourn in Sion, beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.—I will not leave you comfortless; I will come unto you." You shall return to Sion with joy and gladness; sorrow and sighing shall be for ever done away, and everlasting glory shall rest upon you!

2. Yet again, I say hear Him, all ye that mourn, and refuse to be comforted till you find Jesus. Your sorrow shall not endure long: the God whom ye seek, will come and save you. Be not cast down. Why is your soul disquieted within you! Trust in the name of the Lord; for you shall yet praise him, because of the light of his countenance. His bowels yearn over you; your tears are in his bottle: though he hides his face from you, as it were, for a moment, yet he will come, and receive you with everlasting lovingkindness! O

then, your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you!

3. You "hunger and thirst after righteousness." And "I," saith the Lord, "will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour out my Spirit upon you. Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; come, buy and eat; yea, buy wine and milk, without money and without price. Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life *freely*. Eat, O friends, and drink; yea, drink abundantly, O beloved. Eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." All things are ready; there is bread enough, and to spare, for you all! "Come unto me," saith Christ. And again, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out. He that cometh unto me shall never hunger; and he that believeth in me, shall never thirst; for the water that I will give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." Ye shall be filled; ye shall be satisfied, as with marrow and fatness; yea, with all the fulness of God! His love shall fill the whole capacity of your soul. "The times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;" and then "with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."

"Come then, ye souls by sin opprest,
Ye restless wand'ers after rest,
Ye poor and maim'd, and halt and blind,
In Christ a hearty welcome find!

Jesus to you his fulness brings,
A feast of marrow, and fat things:
All, all in Christ, is freely given,—
Pardon, and holiness, and heaven!"

4. O how graciously does he cry to you that are weary and heavy-laden, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest!"—rest from the guilt, the power, and the punishment of sin. All these gracious declarations, encouragements, and invitations, are addressed to you that are of a penitent and weary spirit. And such are all those, who (1.) are stripped of self-sufficiency; (2.) mourn for God; (3.) hunger and thirst after Christ and his righteousness. These are not far from the kingdom of God. The time of your redemption is at hand. O hear Jesus pronouncing concerning thee, "Thy sins are forgiven! I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own name's sake." Now, believest thou this? If you read over the whole book of God, there is nothing to be found but great and precious promises to penitent sinners: as, on the other hand, all the curses, woes, and threatenings in the Bible are against impenitent sinners, Scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites; who cover themselves with their own righteousness, are rich in their own conceit, increased with goods, and think they have need of nothing. There is not in the whole book of God one intimation of comfort for persons of this character.

But O ye afflicted ones! Christ has good words and comfortable for you. Believe in him for the remission of your sins. Behold him! Behold him! He presents and offers pardon to thee, even now. Embrace the promises! Hope against hope! Hear the words of eternal life! Speak, Lord! command the light to shine. We wait for the "small still voice," that whispers all our sins forgiven. O that the hour were now come! O that we could but believe! Lord, help

my unbelief! I would fain draw near unto thee! Thou hast spoken with a mighty voice, and we have heard thee: O speak again; speak the life-giving word into my poor soul! We cry out of the deeps. Thou sayest, *Come!* Lord, we come unto thee! Take and seal us for thine own. Fulfil thy word in us: wash us, and we shall be clean; we shall have part with thee!

III. 1. As for those "who have tasted that the Lord is gracious;" to them, in the third place, we consider Christ as speaking. Hear him describe your state:—Your sins are forgiven. (Jer. xxxi 34.) The anger of God is turned away from you. (Isaiah xii. 1.) Nothing can be laid to your charge; for there is no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus. (Rom. viii. 1.) The love of God is shed abroad in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, given unto you. (Rom. v. 5.) Yea, your very bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. (1 Cor. vi. 19.) Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby ye cry, Abba, Father. The same Spirit beareth witness with your spirit, that ye are the children of God. (Rom. viii. 16.) Those who believe in the name of Christ, receive power to become the sons of God. (John i. 12.) In short, you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people. (1 Pet. ii. 9.) These are the persons whom Christ means by his sheep. (John x. 14.) And thus we find true believers described in Scripture: they are the light of the world; the glory of the whole earth.

2. Hear him exhorting you to obedience:—"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in

heaven." (Matt. v. 16.) God hath called you to holiness. Be ye therefore holy, as he that hath called you is holy, in all manner of conversation. Whatsoever ye do, do it with your might, unto the Lord. Keep your heart with all diligence. Let your conversation be in grace, as becometh the Gospel of Christ. Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God. By patient continuance in well-doing, seek for honour, and glory, and immortality. O pray always, and do not faint! Watch diligently, read humbly, hear attentively, communicate reverently, deny yourself daily, be ready every moment to take up your cross and follow Jesus, to stripes, to prison, and to death! Give up thy soul, thy body, thy time, thy substance to the Lord. He is "the author of eternal salvation to all who" thus "obey him."

3. Hear his promises:—I know my sheep, and am known of mine; and I will give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish. Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper. Thou shalt go through the fire, and it shall not burn thee, and through the floods, and they shall not drown thee. For the Lord God is a sun and a shield. He is faithful, and has promised not to suffer you to be tempted above what you are able to bear; but will, with the temptation, make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it. In the world, indeed, you must expect tribulation; but in Christ you shall have peace. Underneath you are the everlasting arms. The God of Jacob is the strength of his children's salvation.

These are a few of the precious promises which Christ has made to obedient believers. Against these, the gates of hell shall never be able to prevail. The Lord will never leave nor forsake you; but will preserve you, by his mighty power, through faith, to eternal salvation.

4. Lastly, hear Him concerning your everlasting inheritance:—"In my Father's house are many mansions: I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." And further, "I will be thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." He will withhold no manner of thing that is good from his upright servants. Grace and glory, the unsearchable riches of Christ, all are yours. All holiness, and all happiness; all heaven is yours! God is your Father. (2 Cor. vi.) Christ is your Brother. (Heb. ii.) The Holy Ghost is your Comforter. (John xvi.) The Church is your mother. (Ps. xlv.) The ministers of Christ are your servants. (1 Cor. iii.) The angels of God are your guardians. (Heb. i.) Heaven is your inheritance; (Heb. xi.; 1 Pet. i.) and you shall shortly be there! O! then you shall hunger no more, neither shall ye thirst any more; but the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall lead you to fountains of living water, and God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes. You shall be remembered when the Lord maketh up his jewels.

IV. 1. Hear Him, in the last place, ye backsliding children. Thus saith the Lord, "If any man draw back, my soul hath no pleasure in him." It were better never to know the way of righteousness, than

after one has known it, to turn his back to the holy commandment delivered unto him. If “ he that despised Moses’s law died without mercy under two or three witnesses ; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing ;” thus doing “ despite to the Spirit of grace ?” He that, knowing his master’s will, doeth it not, deserves to be beaten with many stripes. Alas ! Are you not twice dead,—withered branches, who have grieved and tempted the Spirit of the Lord, causing him to depart from you ? You once ran well ; but have been hindered : you have turned again to folly. Wherefore your second state is worse than the first.

2. Yet once again, O ye backsliders, hear the Lord’s counsel : “ Remember from whence you are fallen, and repent, and do the first works.” Consider how it has been with you in days that are past ; what faith, and joy, and peace, and love you once enjoyed, while the candle of the Lord shone upon your head, and your goings were directed by his eye ! O repent of your fall ! Be afflicted and mourn, and do not rest till the Lord speak again to your heart, “ Be of good courage : I am merciful to thine iniquity ; I do not condemn thee !”

3. And, for your encouragement, hear what the Lord saith : “ I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely.” Christ hath purchased, and bestows gifts upon the rebellious ; even upon such as once fought under his banner, against the world, the flesh, and the devil, but have now deserted him. Only take

with you words and return. Acknowledge your perfidy, and vow allegiance to your rightful Lord. Determine rather to die the most afflictive, shameful death, than flinch from him any more. So will thy merciful Lord receive thee graciously, and upbraid thee not.

4. But shouldest thou still harden thyself in thy folly, and refuse to return and repent of thy treacherous dealing, O take heed lest he purpose in his displeasure, "My Spirit shall no more strive with thee!" Unless thou repent, he will remove the candlestick from thee; and perhaps leave thee only a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries of the Lord. He will take the word of his truth utterly away from thee, and leave thee to the hardness and insensibility of a wretched revolting heart. O take heed! Do not crucify afresh the Lord of glory, nor put him, any longer, to an open shame!

5. As for you who are disconsolate, being sensibly touched with a feeling of your deep wants, to you I preach Christ *crucified*! I preach him an instant Saviour. Now behold the Lamb of God! I beseech you to come to him. He is gracious, and willing to receive you. His heart is full of compassion, and his arms are open to accept and embrace you all! O be not unbelieving! Venture your souls upon him. Put the Lord to it. Plead the promises. God, by his own word, has engaged himself to have mercy upon you: for, though you have followed after many lovers, yet, "Return unto me, saith the Lord, and I will have mercy upon you."

"O, but," you may say, "we are not yet humble enough; we have not shed tears nor prayed enough."

Would to God you were more humble, and that you could weep and pray much more abundantly! But still, remember, this is not the cause of your justification, in whole, nor in part. No, if you trust in these, or in any thing you can possibly do or suffer, you lay another foundation than Christ; and the Scriptures affirm, "Other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid, even the Lord Jesus Christ." Whosoever thou art, that feelest thy sins a sore burden, and earnestly desirest Christ to be thy Saviour; know that faith alone is required of thee in order to thy acceptance with God. If thou hast nothing to pay; if thou hast no dependance on thyself, or any other creature, or thing; then come to Christ: he will frankly forgive you all. O come to your Lord! Come, poor, destitute, forsaken, and forlorn as thou art: he will, he will receive thee!

" His love is mighty to compel!
 His conq'ring love consent to feel;
 Yield to his love's resistless power,
 And fight against your God no more!

Come to him now; throw yourself into his arms! Say unto him, "Here am I, Lord, a vile, backsliding sinner. I have grieved thy Spirit, wounded my conscience, and constrained thee to depart from me! All my nature is unclean, is sin! I am full of every evil; neither have I power to turn to thee. I well know, all my prayers, tears, groans, and cries cannot save me: but, O my God, my Saviour, I come to thee, to receive thy free and undeserved mercy! I ask forgiveness in the name of Christ! I cast my soul upon the merits of his passion! Lord Jesus, save, O save a lost sinner,

that flies to thy breast! Enable me to believe in thee! Help me to lay hold on the promises! Apply thy blood to my wounded spirit! Ah, thou Friend of sinners, look upon a criminal at thy throne of grace! Make this to me a time of love! Put upon me the garments of salvation, the robe of righteousness; and let me go away rejoicing and praising God!"

As for you who are believers in Christ, ye have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things. You are hereby taught what manner of persons ye ought to be, in all holy conversation and godliness. Yet I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance. O consider what God has done for you, and be thankful! Weigh well the duties he requires of you, and be exact in the performance of them. Do the will of God from the heart. Be obedient in all things. Still behold the joy, the glory, that is set before you, and be encouraged to press forwards. There is laid up for you in heaven an exceeding and eternal weight of glory! Wherefore, comfort yourselves with these things.

THE GREAT SALVATION, AND THE
DANGER OF NEGLECTING IT.

DISCOURSE III.

HEBREWS II. 3.

“HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE, IF WE NEGLECT SO GREAT
SALVATION?”

THE Lord God has no pleasure in the death of a sinner: for, as he is loving to every man, he would have all men to come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved. God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that all who believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. “Therefore,” as the Apostle observes in the context, “we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip: for if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, how shall we escape if

we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be preached by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by them that heard him?" Thus the inspired writer shows and enforces the excellency and preciousness of the redemption which is in and through our Lord Jesus Christ; who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. From the words of the text I shall consider,

I. That the Gospel salvation is great.

II. That the neglecters of this salvation shall be sorely punished.

III. I shall make some application.

I. I am to show that the Gospel salvation is great. And this will appear, 1. By comparing it with other deliverances that have been wrought even by God himself; 2. By considering who the author of it is; 3. The means made use of to accomplish it; and, 4. The salvation itself, or the benefits that accrue to us through Jesus Christ.

1. The deliverance of Noah from the general destruction brought upon the old world, by the flood, was wonderful; but it is much inferior to the deliverance of our souls from the deluge of God's wrath, which we obtain by the Gospel. The preservation of Lot from destruction in Sodom was great, but the salvation which we obtain by the Gospel, from the vengeance of eternal fire, is far greater.—We may instance in Daniel, and the three children in the fiery furnace: yet still, all this is not to be compared with the deliverance accomplished by Jesus Christ for those that receive him. He saves them from the roaring lion, the devil, and from the fiery furnace, the smoke of which ascendeth up for ever and ever.

2. The author of this salvation is described, Isaiah ix. 6: even the mighty God, the Father of eternity, the Prince of Peace. He was not a mere man, or an angel; but God manifest in the flesh; yea, that God who is over all, by whom all things were made, and by whom they still subsist. God looked to see if there was any to help, and there was not one that could recover man from his apostasy. He must save man himself, or man must perish for ever.

3. As to the means which God hath made use of to accomplish man's salvation:—the Scripture tells us, that he was made in the likeness of sinful flesh; (Rom. viii. 3;) that is, he took our human nature upon him, with all its miseries and infirmities, sin only excepted. This appeared from his being a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. And he not only took on him our nature, and suffered much affliction and temptation for near thirty-four years; but he also laid down his life for our ransom. Without shedding of blood there could be no remission; and only the precious blood of this immaculate Lamb could have put away our sin: blood which, because of its inestimable worth, is called the blood of God. (Acts xx. 28.)

4. The salvation itself, or the benefits that accrue unto those who are real Christians, I shall consider more at large: this indeed is the thing chiefly intended by the Apostle. And,

(1.) Through Christ, we are saved from the guilt of all our sins. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. (Rom. viii. 1.) All that believe in him, are justified from all things. (Acts xiii. 39.) By being saved from the guilt of sin, I mean, that free redemption which the sinner has in the blood of

Christ, in the moment he lays hold on the promise by faith. The words of St. Peter confirm this: "To him" (i. e., to Christ) "give all the Prophets witness, that whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts x. 43.) This is the gift of God. By grace our sins are forgiven; "for by grace we are saved through faith; and that not of ourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. ii. 8, 9.) Christ is the sole cause of our justification. What he did, and suffered, and ever pleads as our High Priest, is the meritorious cause of our acceptance with God. And faith is the only condition on which we receive this atonement; or, the instrument by which we apprehend the love and righteousness of God in Christ Jesus.

(2.) Through Christ, believers are saved from the power of sin. This is copiously set forth by St. Paul in the sixth chapter to the Romans. Thus saith the Apostle, at the sixth verse: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." And again, at the fourteenth verse: "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace:" even under that grace that bringeth salvation, and that leadeth you to renounce all ungodliness and worldly desires. The Son hath made you free. He hath made you victorious over sin. You trample it under your feet. You are crucified with Christ. Sin is conquered, and grace reigns through righteousness. Those that receive remission of sins, in the same moment receive power to forsake all outward sin, and to keep down inward sin. The law of the Spirit of life, which is through Christ

Jesus, hath made them free from the law of sin and death.

(3.) Believers are saved, through Christ, from the contagion of sin. He destroys all the works of the devil. He brings in everlasting righteousness. He fully saves his people from their sins. He heals all their diseases, and cleanses them from all unrighteousness. This is largely promised and explained in the thirty-sixth chapter of Ezekiel, from the twenty-fifth to the twenty-ninth verse. There God promises,

(i.) That he will cleanse them from all their filthiness and idols; (ii.) give them a new heart, and a right spirit; (iii.) give them his Spirit; (iv.) cause them to walk in his statutes, to keep his judgments, and to do them; and (v.) that they shall be saved from all their uncleanness. This is the rest that remains for the people of God. Agreeable to these words of the Prophet are the words of the Apostle; (Eph. iv.; Col. i.; Tit. ii. ;) which, compared and joined together, abundantly prove that God's people, who exercise themselves unto godliness, are, not only a chosen generation, and a royal priesthood, but also a holy nation, a peculiar people, who are called out of darkness into marvellous light, that they may show forth the virtues of Christ Jesus. Thus they are partakers of the divine nature. The great and precious promises are fulfilled in them.

(4.) They that are delivered from the body of sin and death, are saved likewise from fear, from all fear that has torment. (1 John iv. 18.)—(i.) From the fear of man. (ii.) From the fear of death; for now they can triumph, and say, "O death, where is thy sting?"

The sting of death is sin ; but their sins are forgiven ; therefore the fear of death terrifies them no more. (iii.) From the fear of hell, or the wrath of God. This is turned away. (Isaiah xii. 1.)

(5.) Believers are saved from the power of the grave. This corruption shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. The bodies of the saints shall be fashioned like to the glorious body of Christ. (Phil. iii. 21.) Thus, O grave, He will be thy destruction !

(6.) The saints shall be saved from hell, and all misery. All tears shall be wiped away from their eyes. (Rev. vii. 17.) They shall have fulness of joy, and pleasure for ever more. They are saved from sin, and hell, and misery, into happiness and glory.

II. I come, in the second place, to show, that the neglecters of this salvation shall be sorely punished ; for, as the Apostle saith, “ if the word spoken by angels,” on mount Sinai, at the promulgation of the law, “ was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ?”—that is, if we, through carelessness or stubbornness, neglect to make our calling and election sure : if we trample under foot the Son of God, his love in dying for us, and esteem his precious blood (with which he seals his covenant) an unholy or common thing ? The greater the salvation is, the more grievous will the damnation of those be who neglect it. Nothing can possibly provoke the Lord God more, than that men should slight his mercy, which he has so stupendously and wonderfully manifested in Christ his Son The

Son must also be angry, that, after all he has done for his vineyard, men should make light of his love, which he has shown in dying for them. But, to explain this point more particularly, it is necessary to show, that impenitent sinners, of every kind, do not and cannot escape the vengeance of God. And,

1. Those that never seriously consider their latter end, that seldom cry for mercy or forgiveness, those that despise the grace of Christ and have no relish for spiritual things, have that which condemns them in their own breasts, even that monitor, conscience, which God has placed in the soul, to bear witness against their ungodly deeds. Their own heart condemns them, whether they will or no. God shines often into their souls, and shows them the error of their way, and the imminent danger they are in. Therefore they "are like the troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." (Isaiah lvii. 20, 21.) Indeed, how should they have peace? The wrath of God abideth on them; they are miserable; they have no solid joy, no permanent pleasure. God hath reserved happiness in himself, and he is resolved it shall never be given to the disobedient. All the happiness of the wicked is like the morning cloud and the early dew: there is a curse on them, and on whatsoever they do. So that even in this life, God often severely punishes those that abuse his mercy, that neglect his salvation.

And although the ungodly may seem to be easy and joyful, we know that they are not so in reality. While there is hardness of heart, and ignorance of Christ, the soul must be miserable. For as the righteous have two heavens, viz., a heaven of grace here, and a

heaven of glory in the world to come, even so the neglecters of the great salvation are, in a sense, damned while they live; the pangs of hell get hold of them; the worm that dies not is gnawing them; the dogs of hell are often let loose on them, especially when they come to die; then they are confounded: all their miserable comforters forsake them, die they must! And O! what breaking of bones is this! This is unto them the beginning of that sorrow that shall never end! If they look back, they see nothing but sin and shame in all their life: if forward, hell and wrath are before them. If they look up, they must see an angry God; and if down, an open gulf! Undoubtedly, the devil and his angels are ready to seize on the souls of the ungodly immediately. The sinner is hedged in on every side.

2. But, supposing those that neglect the great salvation could escape in this life, they cannot, however, escape in the world to come; for all their works shall be brought into judgment. They shall not go unpunished: no; strong is the Lord, who judgeth them; and he is righteous and terrible too. When the day of his wrath is come, the neglecters of the great salvation shall not be able to sit in judgment, nor stand in the congregation of the righteous. The books shall be opened! even their conscience, to bear witness against them: and another book shall be opened, that is, the book of remembrance, where all their omissions and commissions, and all their vilenesses, are registered. And then, where shall the wicked and ungodly appear? This is the day of vengeance of our God, when his Son shall be exalted on the holy hill of Sion, to make his enemies his footstool. Now

the wicked will call upon the rocks and the mountains to fall upon them, and cover them from the face of Almighty God! And, in one sense, they shall get the thing that they desire: for the rocks will fall upon them, to grind them to powder. Then shall they be bound in bundles, to burn them up. (Matt. xiii. 30.)

Again, the vengeance of God will still pursue them: they shall be cast into that lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death; (Rev. xxi. 8;) where the smoke of their torment ascends up for ever and ever! Now the wicked are in their own place: and for this reason, because they would not have the fear of the Lord; they would not have Christ to reign over them; they rejected his counsel, and would none of his reproof; therefore he laughs at their calamity, and mocks when their fear cometh. All the curses of God, all the threatenings in the Bible, are now inflicted upon them. The vials of God's wrath are poured down upon them. Here are weeping, and lamentation, and woe! Thus they that neglect the great salvation shall go into everlasting fire, and have their portion with the devil and his angels; where their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched! You see clearly, the wicked cannot escape, neither in the day of judgment, nor in eternity. But God will thus avenge himself on his adversaries.

III. I come, in the last place, to apply the preceding considerations. And,

1. It may be observed, How glorious this deliverance is, which hath been accomplished by Christ! how far superior to all those wonderful works and deliverances which God wrought in old times! We

are now saved from sin and wrath ; saved in the ark of the covenant, even Christ. He is our Hiding-place, and our Rock of Defence. (Isa. xxxii. 2.) We are saved from a deluge of wrath and misery, much worse than that which destroyed the old world : but more of this hereafter.

2. From what has been considered, it is easy to observe, (1.) How heinous must sin be in the sight of God ! He would not let it go unpunished, though the punishment fell upon his well-beloved Son ! O what a complicated crime was that of Adam ! And how great evils are all our sins, seeing no less a person than the mighty God could atone for them ! The detestable nature and dangerous consequences of sin are fully discovered only in the wounds and sufferings of the Son of God ! Consider this, ye that talk of little sins : see what it cost to redeem the fallen race ! O let holy indignation rise in your breast against your sins ! Slay them, hate them, be afflicted on their account, and cast them all away for ever ! —(2.) How infinite, how inconceivable, was the love of God towards sinners, that he should give us his only-begotten Son, to redeem our souls from sin and death ! (John iii. 16.) Lord, what is man, that thou shouldst so regard him ? O sinners, see the love of Christ to your poor souls ! When no other ransom could purchase, he gives himself for us. He dies, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God ! See how he bears our sins in his own body upon the tree ! Behold the man ! the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief ! Was there ever love or sorrow like unto thine, O Jesus ? O beloved, does not the love of Christ constrain you to love him ? Can you any

longer neglect the great salvation? Why will ye die? O! why will ye persist in sin? The Lord of life has shed his precious blood to save you! Come, draw near unto him; fly to the arms of his love; hide you in his open wounds. Do not any more think light of his dying love. Let it melt down your stubbornness. O God, give us a sight of our sins, that we may abhor ourselves; and show unto us of the things of Jesus! Now turn away thy wrath from us, and fill our souls with joy and peace in believing!

3. I beseech you to consider, with great seriousness, the great, the glorious salvation, which is offered to you by the Gospel. O come, whatever else you neglect, do not neglect this! It is much to be desired; it is precious and lovely; it yields us all good things. To be saved from the guilt, the power, the defilement of sin,—from all fear of death, and hell, and wrath,—in short, from all misery; and, moreover, to be made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,—to come to God's eternal joy,—O what a salvation is this! My brethren, seek it while it may be found. Never rest, till your souls are released from the bondage of corruption, and brought into the liberty of the sons of God. Now is the time that the grace of God must appear to you, to save you from all sin. The blood and righteousness of Christ must be applied and brought into your souls. We must now know Christ for ourselves. Unless we are washed with his blood, we can have no part with him. Wash us, O Lord, and make us clean! O deliver us from the body of this death!

O pray, and cry, till you know that God is your salvation! Cry for the Spirit of Adoption, to purify

your hearts. Believe for the remission of your sins. Do not deceive your own souls. If Christ does not dwell in your hearts by faith; if he does not shed abroad his love there, your faith, your religion is vain. If ever you enter into glory, you must be justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God. All the body of sin must be destroyed; that is, all old things must be done away: (2 Cor. v. 17 :) and this must be done in the present world; for there is no work, nor device, nor wisdom, nor knowledge in the grave, whither we go.

4. Remember how it shall happen to all those that forget God; to those who are disobedient, and despise the riches of God's grace. They shall be punished both in time and in eternity: God hath cursed them, and they cannot be blessed. They shall have a trembling heart, and failing of eyes; neither shall they be able to find rest for body or soul. My dear friends, let me freely speak unto you; and do not count me your enemy for telling you the truth. Have you not neglected this salvation? Have you not made light of the message which God hath sent you? He has warned you to flee from the wrath to come; but, alas! you are, many of you, yet in your sins. O make no more lame excuses! Let not your farms, your merchandises, or any of the cares of this life, take up your hearts and all your time. Count all but dross and dung, in comparison of the saving knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. O kiss the Son, lest he be angry with you, and swear in his wrath you shall never taste of his supper!

5. Now pluck out the right eye; cut off the right hand; lay aside every weight, and whatever sin does

most easily beset you. Unless you are thus minded, unless you put this in execution, you cannot escape the damnation of hell: God will bring you to judgment. O you stout-hearted, stiff-necked sinners! ye enemies of God, ye heirs of woe, ye murderers of your own souls! repent, repent; turn to God while mercy's door is open, before you are consigned over to the tormentors! You know you are not happy now. No; how should you, while you neglect the great salvation? and the misery you now feel in your body and mind is only the beginning of your sorrows: justice is punishing you; the arm of the Lord is lifted up to cut you down; you have cumbered the ground, alas, how long! O God, in the midst of wrath, remember mercy! Spare us, good Lord, till we recover our spiritual health; till our souls are washed in the blood of the Lamb!

6. Say not, "We cannot bear this man; we hate him: he never prophesies good concerning us." I can prophesy nothing better concerning you while you are living in rebellion against God. I dare not speak smooth things to you. No; I ask you, in the name of God, how you can stand before the righteous Judge? If he was *now* to require your soul of you, how could you answer before him for having neglected the great salvation? Would your vain and worldly excuses satisfy him? Alas! you know they would not. I warn you this day to cast away your transgressions: I call heaven and earth to witness against you, that if you do not, these words which you hear this day will increase your damnation to all eternity; and how then can you dwell with everlasting burnings? O that my head were waters, and mine eyes fountains of tears,

that I might weep over your dying souls! O that I could persuade you to be reconciled to God!

7. And now, lest any should utterly despair, let me tell you, God is willing to forgive you all. After all you have done, he will take you into his favour. Here is a *great salvation for great sinners*. Come, though your sins be as scarlet, they can be made as white as snow in the blood of Christ. Be encouraged: draw near and hear, and your soul shall live: Jesus, the sinner's friend, is ready to receive you; he came to save such poor, vile, helpless sinners as we are. Methinks your hearts begin to relent: you seem desirous to see Jesus. Lord, carry on the work thou hast begun!

8. Yet, saith the Lord, I am willing to have mercy upon you, to forgive all your sins, to heal all your diseases; my heart is filled with pity towards you; I love you still, and rejoice to bless you and make you happy. How can you doubt of this? Could there be any greater instance of my great love for your souls than what I have shown? I have given my only begotten Son to die for you: I have also sent you my Spirit and my messengers to woo you, and beseech you to be reconciled to me. And, O sinners, will you now hearken unto me? Will you be wise, and accept this mercy? Will you be forgiven, and that freely? Are you satisfied to cast away your transgressions, and be made the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty? Can you hold out any more? Does not your misery move you? Does not my love constrain you? O let something prevail! I am not willing that any of you should perish: I swear unto you, I have no pleasure in your death. O believe this, and now receive my

Son! I give him to you freely: take him and use him, as you stand in need of him: let him be for light and for comfort, for righteousness and for strength, unto you. And, moreover, I will give you my Holy Spirit, to guide you and assist you: and, still more, after I have prepared you for glory, I will give you a crown and a kingdom; you shall sit at my table and dwell in my house, and have the privileges of sons; your sins shall not be-mentioned to you; I will love you as though you had never offended me.

9. Now I say, O sinner, if thou didst hear the Lord speak thus unto thee, sure thou wouldest leave thy sins and accept of mercy. Why then, these are in effect the very words of God: he reasons with you after this manner. Well may you and I make answer and say, "It is true, Lord, I am a vile, helpless sinner; I condemn myself; I abhor myself as in dust and ashes; and, O my God, I admire and embrace thy mercy; I fly to thee for succour and salvation; I am destitute of all good. O be it unto me according to thy word! Receive me graciously, and love me freely; sanctify me wholly, and save me eternally!" Is this the language of thine heart, O thou afflicted and tossed with tempest, and not comforted? Be of good courage then: thou art not far from the kingdom of God; the time of your redemption is at hand. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!

10. To conclude: I beseech you never to rest till your hearts are thus broken; till you are deeply sensible of your lost estate, and fly to him for mercy. And ye that know what is in your heart, cry, O cry mightily unto the Lord, till he gives you rest for your soul! You that are justified freely, through the re-

demption that is in Jesus Christ, see that ye walk as becometh the Gospel. Be ye followers of God, as dear children, and walk in love, the love of God and man; abound in every good word and work: your prayers, and tears, and hearing, and communicating will not, indeed, merit heaven; Jesus Christ hath done this; yet you are called upon to walk in these ordinances of God blameless. You are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, in which God hath appointed you should walk. Do not, therefore, imagine that I have been making "void the law through faith." God forbid! I know "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good;" that is, "if a man use it lawfully," for the end that God gave it, "as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ;" and, after we are justified, to be a rule of life unto us. Let us thus love the law of the Lord, and keep the covenant of our God, that we "may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God;" to whom be the glory, kingdom, and dominion, through our Lord Jesus Christ, world without end! Amen.

JESUS CHRIST MADE OF GOD UNTO
US WISDOM, RIGHTEOUSNESS, SANC-
TIFICATION, AND REDEMPTION.

DISCOURSE IV.

1 CORINTHIANS I. 30.

“BUT OF HIM ARE YE IN CHRIST JESUS, WHO OF GOD IS MADE
UNTO US WISDOM, AND RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND SANCTIFICATION,
AND REDEMPTION.”

1. God made man in his own image, and crowned him with glory and honour; but man, by sinning, soon divested himself of this image and glory, and “brought death into the world, with all our woe.” He fell from his God, and became miserable; rendered himself incapable of doing his Maker’s will, or procuring his favour: both his body and soul were defiled; there remained no sound part in him. Lifted up with pride, he aspired to be like God, and so fell into the condemnation of the devil: the seed of the serpent was infused into him, and he retained, in part, the very image of Satan.

2. But all this evil did not terminate in the first man: no, "in Adam all died, and fell short of the glory," the glorious image "of God." "By" his "one offence, judgment came upon all men to condemnation;" so that every child of Adam is conceived and born in sin: we are "children of wrath;" we have every one a strong propensity to evil, and an aversion to good.

3. Moreover, man has improved his stock of wickedness, and is more and more alienated from God by actual, wilful transgression. He is, in this sense, "twice dead:" hence, "the Scripture hath concluded all men under sin;" "every mouth" is "stopped, and all the world become guilty before God;" so that, should he enter into judgment with the whole human race, no flesh living could be justified in his sight, but all must have their portion with the devil and his angels.

4. However, bad as his state is, man is not irrecoverably lost. No, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." St. Paul, who determined with himself to know nothing save Jesus Christ, and him crucified, had a singular talent to set forth the riches of God's free and sovereign grace for the salvation of sinners in the Son of his love. Indeed, the main drift of this Epistle is to show the wisdom and goodness of God in providing, through Christ, for the redemption of the whole world. In the preceding verses he intimates the ignorance, unrighteousness, corruption, and slavery of mankind; and then introduces the glad tidings contained in the text "But of him," that is, of God's free love and boundless mercy, "are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made

unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." And thus, "where sin" hath "abounded," "grace" hath "much more abounded; that as sin hath reigned unto death by one," namely, Adam, "so grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." In discoursing on these words, I shall follow the order laid down by the Apostle: his words are beautifully connected; he digs deep, and lays his foundation sure; and on it builds "gold, silver, and precious stones," and thus ascends fair and high in the Christian fabric. Let us then consider,

I. How is Christ made unto us, of God, wisdom?

II. Righteousness?

III. Sanctification?

IV. And, lastly, redemption?

Lord Jesus, I undertake this in thy name: I am now about to speak of thee. Ah, my Saviour, stand by me; direct my heart and lips; let me advance nothing of my own, but let thine eternal truth and grace be fully known to all that shall hear! Lord, answer and help, for thy mercy's sake!

I. How is Christ made unto us, of God, Wisdom?
1st, As a Teacher sent from God, who brings life and immortality to light by the gospel; and, 2dly, As it is he that inwardly enlightens the soul, and shows us our real condition.

1. As a Teacher sent from God, he unfolds the mysteries of godliness, and lets us into an entirely new scene of divine things, which had been hid from ages and generations. The Prophets and holy men of old, who have been since the foundation of the world, had much light into and knowledge of the things and truths of God: this they owed to the Spirit of Christ, which

was in them: they “spake as they were moved” (carried away) “by the Holy Ghost.” But all their light and knowledge was, in comparison of that which Christ revealed, but as the light of a candle to that of the sun. In this sense also, “that which was glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excelled.” “Grace and truth,” spiritual and immortal life, all “came by Jesus Christ.” The Scribes and Pharisees were the stated and celebrated teachers in the Jewish church, but Jesus Christ’s teaching far exceeded theirs. (See Matt. v. 21, &c.; vii. 29.) He has taken away the veil, and set forth the law of God in all its native beauty: he has explained the length, and breadth, and height of that “holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.” Our Lord is properly called, the Word and Wisdom of God: he reveals things which were hid not only from men, but angels also: he is the bright and the morning Star, the Sun of Righteousness, the Light of the World: he is the Day-spring from on high, which, when we sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, arose to visit us: the whole earth is lightened with his glory.

He teacheth us concerning the Father, his eternal wisdom, power, goodness, and truth; he only has explained the true sense of the divine law. He teacheth how sinners are saved from sin and wrath, namely, through his own blood and righteousness. It is from Christ himself that we are instructed concerning the spiritual union of believers with God through him: by him we are taught concerning the resurrection from the dead and eternal judgment: he first explicitly treated of eternal life and eternal death. To Christ, our great Prophet, alone we are indebted for these

discoveries. He is the faithful and the true Witness, the author and giver of all true wisdom.

We are no longer left to the uncertain accounts of tradition. This, indeed, had its use for a time: thus Adam, as may well be supposed, informed Seth of every material transaction from the creation to his time. Seth did the same to his son Enos, and so on to Noah, to Abraham, and till the time of Moses. But we have a surer word of prophecy than all this. Jesus Christ, the beginning of the creation of God, who was in the bosom of the Father from eternity, he hath opened his mouth, and instructed us in all things necessary to our becoming wise unto salvation; so that, henceforth, "this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, but men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." With regard to multitudes, therefore, even to this day, it may be said, as of old, "Darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people."

2. Though, still, this external information and discovery of things, unknown of old, would be far short of what we need, did not Christ still go farther, and enlighten the soul inwardly, to know itself and to know its God. "Know thyself,"—a sentence so much admired in the heathen world, and thought worthy to be inscribed in gold,—is the first lesson which Christianity teacheth. But this is learned only by the illumination of Jesus Christ: he not only takes away the veil from the word, but likewise from our heart; he, as the eternal brightness of the Father's glory, shines inwardly upon us; and, as in the beginning he commanded the light to shine out of darkness, so doth he now shine into the dungeon of the sinner's

heart, and discover the mystery of iniquity that lodges there.

The first work of the Holy Spirit, sent in the name of Christ, is to convince us of sin. (John xvi. 8.) The sword of the Spirit must wound the conscience, and the hammer of God's word break the stony heart, before Christ pours in the wine and oil of his precious mercy. "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." (Mark ii. 17.) The law of God, coming home to the conscience, convinces the sinner of inward and spiritual wickedness, as well as of outward transgression; the sinner becomes stripped of all his filthy rags, and sees himself in a desperate and damnable state. "What must I do to be saved?" is then his language. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Woe is me, I am so fast bound in prison that I cannot come forth: my soul is exceeding sorrowful: God be merciful to me a sinner! Lord, save or I perish! Out of the deep I cry unto thee. O hear me speedily!"

Then is fulfilled these words: "Thus saith the Lord, We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace: ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble." Thus, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. When the soul of a poor, profane, ungodly sinner is powerfully awakened by the Spirit of Christ, he is sore amazed, and, at the discovery of his foul stains, cries out, "I never thought I was such a wretch,—such a very devil incarnate! O God,

my whole soul is a sink of iniquity,—a habitation of dragons, and of every hurtful thing!”

The sinner is now convinced he has no faith; no true, saving, Christian faith. He sees his soul naked, and feels the wrath of God abiding upon him. The curse of the law takes place in him; confusion and misery are before his eyes. “Alas!” (is then his language,) “I once thought myself rich and increased with goods, having need of nothing; but I now discern, that I am wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. Should the Lord enter into judgment with me, my soul must perish everlastingly. Lord, how have I deceived myself! I thought I was a Christian. I ignorantly imagined that my own doings might save me, at least in part. But now, I see plainly, that all my works, even the very best of them, have had in them the nature of sin; neither can they avail, in the smallest measure, towards my justification.” Such is the state, and such are the sentiments, of a truly awakened sinner. And concerning these, it may be observed,

(1.) That no sooner does a person discover himself in such wretched circumstances, than he begins to amend his ways and his doings, and to turn to the Lord his God. Even the spirit of bondage implies a breaking off from outward wickedness, and an endeavour to walk in the practice of Christian duties, with regard both to God and man.

(2.) He has the greatest aversion to sin; a perfect hatred to his former wickedness; and especially against the sin that did most easily beset him. He dreads offending God any more; he fears the increasing of his torments, the doing violence to his now

enlightened conscience. It is true, that while a person is only under the law, he finds a law, a constraining power, in his members, warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin and death; but this is against his will. He would serve the Lord aright; but, as yet, cannot. Formerly he was the willing servant of sin, and slave of the devil; now, he has forsaken the service of Satan, and commits sin only through his inability to refrain from it.

(3.) All persons feel not the same degree of conviction and condemnation. They are not terrified in the same fearful manner. Some pass, as it were, through hell; its pains get hold upon them in their travel from nature to grace; while others are more gently drawn, and allured by love, to forsake their evil courses, and turn to the Lord. But, alas! in how many does the word prove wholly unfruitful! Some hear it joyfully, and bring forth the fruit of repentance for a season; but, being contented with feeble rays of light, and some little traces of joy and love,—the word having never deeply entered their heart, or wounded their conscience; and being afraid that it should,—they fall away, and become as salt without its savour. Yea, some even believe for a time; but, having never had a deep ground-work of self-knowledge, by and by, when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, they are offended, and become worse than before. Although the degrees of pain and sorrow of mind are various in different persons; nevertheless, a thorough sense of guilt, and deservingness of punishment, goes, in all, before the true peace of God. Jesus binds up only broken hearts; he comforts those

that mourn ; he fills the hungry with good things, but sends the rich empty away.

Christ inwardly enlightens, and shows all that are converted, these things ; and thus becomes of God unto us Wisdom. This is the first work which passes upon the soul, when the Lord arises to bring the sinner to himself and heaven. He mightily shakes the foundation of the heart, causing a man to feel the bitterness of sin, and thence, often, to roar for the disquietude of his spirit. The Lord also kindles in the awakened breast, vehement desires after the righteousness of Christ ; the merit of his blood, to be applied to his soul, for justification. In this particular likewise, Christ becomes our Wisdom, by showing the sinner, there is no other name under heaven whereby he can be saved, but the name of Jesus. And having thus executed the Holy Spirit's first work,—the showing us, (1.) The nature and extent of the law ; (2.) The guilt of our sins, and corruption of our heart,—our Lord shows us, (3.) The all-sufficiency of his merits, for righteousness and salvation ; which leads us to the second particular to be considered, namely, how Christ is made unto us of God, Righteousness.

II. Christ becomes our Righteousness, First, as he has purchased or procured it for us ; secondly, as he actually applies it to us, or puts us in possession of the purchase ; and, lastly, by making us really righteous.

1. He has purchased righteousness for us. God, who is rich in mercy, according to his great love wherewith he loved us, seeing every mouth stopped, and all the world become guilty before him, vouch-

safed to offer life and salvation to all mankind through the Son of his love. And in order to accomplish this great work of redemption, he prepared a body for his Son; and so God was manifest in the flesh. Having lived a perfectly holy life, and fulfilled that law which Adam had broken, he died a most painful and ignominious death, even the death of the cross. Thus he "bore our sins in his own body upon the tree." He bore our curse, our shame and sorrow. "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." He was "made sin," that is, a sin-offering, "for us," and so became "a propitiation," an atoning sacrifice "for the sins of the whole world."

Having lain three days in the lower parts of the earth, he then rose from the dead, triumphed over death, and destroyed the power of the devil and the grave; after which, having conversed with his Apostles forty days, he ascended up into heaven, where he is exalted at God's right hand, to make intercession for us, "to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

Now, upon the consideration of the perfectly holy life, most precious and meritorious death, and powerfully prevailing intercession or advocacy of Christ, God forgives every penitent, believing sinner, who, renouncing all dependance on himself or any thing else for salvation, trusts alone in the merits of our Saviour's passion. This trust is that faith of the operation of the Holy Spirit, by which we apprehend, for our justification, the blood and righteousness of Christ. And thus, he becomes "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. x. 4.) We are "made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor.

v. 21.) "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are" thus "in Christ Jesus." (Rom. viii. 1.) The law has no more power to condemn them. Christ has made them free, and they are free indeed. And, O! "blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered!" blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works!

We have here considered the purchase and the application of this righteousness together. We may pursue this point still farther. As to the purchase, or the manner of procuring righteousness for us, St. Paul teacheth us, that "without shedding of blood there is no remission." (Heb. ix. 22.) All the legal sacrifices, ordained of God, and offered under the law, were only types of that one great victim; the offering up of the body of our Saviour, once for all, upon the cross. He was the substance; the others were but shadows. "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." (Heb. x. 14.) Our debt was thus paid; justice is satisfied; the law is fulfilled: all its curse, and all its penalty, with all our sins, met together in Christ: He nailed them to the cross, and signed our release in blood!

If righteousness could be by the law, then Christ died in vain. (Gal. ii. 21.) Whatever else a sinner offers to God, in order to his justification, save the blood of Christ, is rejected of him. He has mercy upon us, only through the Son of his love. Yes, we are redeemed, justified, sanctified, and eternally saved, through the very precious and most meritorious blood of the blessed Jesus.

These benefits become ours only through faith. If thou canst but believe, all these things are thine.

“ Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. To him that worketh not, but believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted unto him for righteousness.” This is the language of the new testament, in Christ’s blood. Whosoever will come to Christ for life and salvation, let him come naked, poor, self-condemned ; having no righteousness ; being full of sin, corruption, and misery ; and in this manner, throw himself into the arms of the mercy of God, and by faith rely upon Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of sins. “ Him that cometh unto me,” saith Christ, “ I will in no wise cast out.”

Thus Abraham believed God ; and it was imputed to him for righteousness. He saw the day of Christ by faith, and was glad : so does every broken-hearted sinner, at this day, behold Jesus Christ, the righteous ; and, being healed by him, rejoices and is exceeding glad. For a summary view of the truth of this particular, that we are benefited, made righteous, by faith in Christ, see Acts x. 43, and xvi. 31 ; Rom. iii. 28, and iv. 5, and x. 4 ; Gal. ii. 16 ; Phil. iii. 9.

Lastly, Christ is made unto us of God righteousness, as he actually makes us righteous ; by enabling us to do the will of God ; according to St. John’s words, “ He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He,” (i. e., God) “ is righteous.” There cannot be a more fatal delusion, than to imagine that any thing which is in Jesus Christ will so avail for us as to bring us to heaven, unless we are ourselves actually, personally, internally, and entirely created anew, in his holy image. For his sake alone we are pardoned and accepted of God ; and from his fulness we derive purity, peace, and power. He is an overflowing fountain of

grace ; and wherever this grace comes, it makes heavenly and divine, it brings salvation. And by a concurrence with this grace, we become strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might ; we overcome the wicked one ; we triumph over sin, trample on the world, become lords of our actions, and, in a word, “ are more than conquerors, through him that loved us.” We are created in Christ Jesus unto good works ; and it is our glory and joy to walk in them. “ As he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation,” is the motto and privilege of the children of the kingdom, whose God is Jehovah, through the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. But the good works and righteous conversation of the children of God are not the drudgery of fear ; much less the fancied provision for meriting aught from God. To all eternity, they will rate themselves unprofitable servants ; their works are the sweet labour of love : we cannot but please him whom we love.

To sum up this point : a sinner is first enlightened by Christ, and by this divine wisdom sees himself a poor, guilty, miserable sinner ; horror and confusion seize upon him, while he perceives himself in a damnable state. The sinner is shown, farther, that he cannot save himself, neither in whole nor in part, by any or all of his own doings. The same light that discovers this, leads him still on, and directs the sinner to the Saviour of lost mankind, the Physician and Friend of poor, lost, wounded souls. He therefore draws near to Christ ; and being enabled, by the power of the Holy Ghost to apprehend and believe in Christ, and in God through Christ, all his sins are blotted

out, he is accepted to favour, as though he had never offended, the robe of Christ's righteousness is put upon him, and thus the sinner is made comely with the beauty of the Lord ! Yes,

“ Defiled and loathsome as we are,
 He makes us white, and calls us fair ;
 Adorns us in the milk-white dress,
 His graces and his righteousness.”

He moreover implants his Spirit within us, and endues us with a principle and power of obeying his will, so that, being loosed from our bonds, we run the way of Christ's commandments with great delight, we partake of his mind and nature, and are enabled to perfect holiness in the holy, loving fear of God. And thus is Christ made of God unto us, what he really is, “ The Lord our righteousness.”

III. We are next to consider, how Christ becomes our Sanctification ? And as this summarily contains in it all the benefits of Christ to us, we may dwell upon it a little more particularly ; and consider, 1. When does our sanctification begin ? 2. How is it carried on ? And, 3. What is the extent of it ?

1. As to the first, namely, When does our sanctification begin ? In the very moment that we are justified ; as soon as God, for Christ's sake, blots out our sins, then does the faith which God bestows upon us begin to work by love, and purify the heart. Before a man is pardoned, he may go a great way in making clean the outside of the cup ; he may reform and amend his ways and his doings, in some tolerable degree ; but the true foundation of inward holiness remains still to be erected, and ever will till the soul

is accepted through Christ. The essential branches of holiness are the love of God and man; and this love cannot exist in our heart, till Christ puts upon us the robe of his righteousness. The knowledge of him for my salvation, by the remission of sin, must be laid, as the foundation of all true inward and outward holiness: man by nature is dead, corrupt, and condemned; and does so abide, till Christ who is the resurrection and the life quickens him, and puts away his sins. A corrupt tree cannot but bring forth evil fruit; a bitter fountain can yield only bitter streams: even so, a fallen soul can in that condition yield no pleasing fruits of righteousness to the Lord. "Make the tree good," saith Christ, "and the fruit will be good also." Our person or state must be first acceptable; and then our works also will be acceptable.

Many persons who admire and really desire holiness, never attain it, because they begin at the wrong end. For, whereas they should first of all come to Christ, as vile, helpless sinners, that they may be freely forgiven all their trespasses; they vainly endeavour to fit themselves for God, as though it were in their own power to recommend themselves to him by some means or other. They imagine that the Lord will not receive them till they have made themselves clean. And some suppose, that even 1 Cor. vi. 11 signifies as much; namely, that we are to be sanctified, before we are justified; because of the order of the words, "Ye are sanctified, ye are justified," &c. But for the removal of this seeming difficulty, it need only be considered, that, in the words of our text, the Apostle places "righteousness," which is equivalent with justification, before sanctification. And it was

according to the wisdom which directed the Apostle to proceed in this order, in the beginning of the Epistle, where he is laying his foundation and fixing the premises, which he afterwards illustrates and proves: whereas in the sixth chapter, he paid less regard to this order, being there only declaring what God had done for their souls. But still further, the very words under consideration evidence the thing I insinuate, namely, that justification is before sanctification. The sense of the passage is this: "Ye are washed," saith the Apostle; that is, ye are cleansed from outward pollutions, from the sins mentioned in the foregoing verse: and he gives a good reason for it; for "ye are sanctified;"—you are inwardly holy; your mind is renewed; your heart is changed. And no wonder; for "ye are justified;"—your sins are forgiven; Christ is your righteousness. And all this is "in" or through "the name of the Lord Jesus,"—the merit of all he did and suffered,—“and by the Spirit of our God,” applying the benefits of Christ to your soul.

If the order of the words only were to be regarded, then it would follow, that, because "in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," are mentioned last, therefore they have the last place in the work of God upon the soul; the mistake of which is glaring: whereas, if we understand the passage in the sense which is here given, we shall see the propriety of the whole verse. Alas! If we could sanctify ourselves, or make ourselves holy, what need should we have of Jesus Christ? Men may indeed attain some degree of rectitude in their behaviour, and moral righteousness in general, even before they are justified; but sure I am, they never will be holy till they feel

the blood of the covenant applied to their souls. Then, and not before, is the love of God shed abroad in their heart; then they can love their neighbour truly; then a measure of love and joy and peace, meekness, patience, and temperance, springs up in their soul; and so they begin to live unto God, and to serve him in an acceptable manner.

2. How is the work of sanctification carried on? Summarily, it may be answered, by the Holy Spirit. He is the principle of all holiness. It is he that begins, continues, increases, and accomplishes it in the soul. And hence the Holy Ghost is called, "The Spirit of holiness." In his light we discover our darkness and corruption, and by his mighty working within us it is destroyed. He is called "The Spirit of judgment, and of burning." (Isaiah iv. 4.) He takes of the things, the merits and benefits, of Christ, and applies them to our soul. "He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap;" as trying and searching the most secret thoughts and intentions of the heart, and purging our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the thoughts of our heart are cleansed, and the mind of Christ is implanted in our soul. He stamps the glorious image of God upon our heart. (2 Cor. iii. 18.) O who can express the deep and divine unction of this glorious Comforter, whereby he enlightens, strengthens, and purifies the living members of Jesus Christ!

But more particularly, we may mention, as subservient to the promoting of this blessed work, (1.) Faith; (2.) Doing, and (3.) Suffering, the will of God.

(1.) It is carried on by faith. (Acts xv. 9, and xxvi. 18.) Yes, as faith is the condition of justification, so it is likewise the instrument of sanctification. It mightily works in the heart. (Gal. v. 6.) By believing, the blood of Christ is continually applied to our conscience; and this cleanses from all sin. (Heb. ix. 14; 1 John i. 7.) O yes, faith has a divine energy, killing and destroying sin in the soul. It apprehends Christ, for spiritual succour, and applies the leaves of the tree of life for the healing all the diseases of the soul. It derives power and holiness from God, the fountain of peace and purity. It is ever urging on the soul to draw nearer to Christ, and makes still clearer and stronger discoveries of his love and excellencies. It first lays hold on Jesus, to put away the heavy load of guilt; and then draws virtue and life from his fulness, to make us "perfect and entire, lacking nothing." Faith, as it were, performs impossibilities; it goes into the very heart of Christ, and quenches in his blood' all the fiery darts of the wicked one. It has so to do with the benefits of Christ, as to make them all its own. Of his righteousness, strength, purity, paradise, and glory, faith says, "All these are mine."

It likewise discovers every disease and weakness of the soul; and yet, far from being discouraged, it goes directly to Christ for remedy. Faith does not stand dejectedly poring over the heart's plague and most inveterate maladies; but it turns its eye to God, who is greater than our heart; it immerses the soul in the fountain of the Saviour's blood. It applies the balm of life; anoints its wounds with that ointment which heals, comforts, and strengthens the inner man.

The time would fail to enumerate all the excel-

lencies and properties of this “best, divinest grace.” Faith, working by love, applying the blood of Christ, relying on the precious promises of the Gospel, overcoming the world, and constantly cleaving to Jesus, is a precious instrument of sanctification. It transforms the soul, changes all its passions and affections, and brings home the fulness of God.

(2.) Doing the will of God is another blessed means in order to our sanctification. By doing the will of God, I mean universal obedience. It is true that works sanctify but indirectly; they are not the foundation of holiness, neither can they be said to merit the grace of God: nevertheless, it is a sure rule, that “to him that hath shall be given.” (Matt. xxv. 29.) Abraham’s faith was made perfect by works; his soul, in the act of obedience, was strengthened in the Lord, and partook of more holiness and happiness; and so it is with regard to every work that the believer doeth; while he improves his talent, he increases it; and every instance of obedience to our Lord’s commandments brings an additional degree of grace and strength to the soul. Indeed, to expect purity of heart otherwise than in a constant exercising ourselves in all the works prepared of God for us to walk in, is a mere imposition of the enemy. Every Christian’s experience convinces him that there is no way of getting forward but by a constant and laborious application to every Christian duty; that although we cannot claim any thing from God as a debt due to us for any thing we can do, nevertheless, he blesses us, only in his own way, —the way of hearkening to his voice, and doing his pleasure. “The rebellious dwell in a dry land.” We must read, pray, communicate, deny ourselves, and

take up our cross daily, if we mean to be the approved servants of Christ. And while we are so employed, the Lord pours in upon us the abundance of his grace and saving health. We shall be exalted into the fellowship of his dear Son; we shall be strengthened in every holy temper and praiseworthy habit; we shall be much more abundantly happy in time, and more glorious in eternity.

Lastly: our Lord makes use of various trials as instruments to purge our soul from all filth and dross. Not indeed that our sufferings, considered in themselves, have any necessary tendency to promote our sanctification. But, as subservient to the wise disposals of God concerning us, and through the presence and power of his grace, afflictions, both of body and mind, produce in us the peaceable fruits of righteousness, to the glory of God. (See Heb. xii. 5, 6. 10; Rev. iii. 19; and vii. 14; Rom. v. 3; James i. 2, 12.)

There is a wonderful perverseness in man's nature, which a course of prosperity exceedingly increases. Our Lord therefore sees it necessary often to humble us, and show us what poor creatures we are! Some indeed are so stubborn and proud, that, so far from submitting themselves to the Lord, they, with impudence, as it were, call him to account for his dealing with them; and say, in effect, "Who is the Lord, that we should regard him?"

But this is not the case with the children of God: they cheerfully submit themselves to his dispensations, knowing that all the designs of their heavenly Father concerning them are, to make them conformable to himself. In every thing, therefore, they are instructed to say, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth

him good." And thus, all things, whether prosperous or adverse, poverty, sickness, reproach, contempt, temptation, or the contrary, all work together for their good. As to the diseases of the body, a child of God knows, they are often sent to cure the sicknesses of the soul, and quietly receives them as such: and as to the pressures which may often come upon the mind, these teach us to seek all our comfort in God; they promote the death of the old man, make us disesteem ourselves, and seek more to God continually. "Be satisfied," said one, writing to a person under affliction, "with the condition in which God places you: however happy you may think me, I envy you. Pains and sufferings would be a paradise to me, while I should suffer with my God: and the greatest pleasure, would be hell to me, if I could relish them without him; all my consolation would be to suffer something for his sake."

Suffer then with thy Lord, that thou mayest reign with him! Believe that whom he loveth he scourgeth. Be the afflictions what they may, they are, while thou cleavest to God, but badges of thy discipleship, and shall, by the grace of God, end in an exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Thus is Christ made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification. God has set such a value on the blood of Christ, has such regard to all he hath done and suffered, that whosoever believes in him is enlightened and forgiven; and, continuing to believe, they shall be made holy, and glorified in heaven. We ascribe all to the mercy of God through Christ Jesus.

3. As to the extent of the work of sanctification,

which we are in the third place to consider ; it reaches to every part,—soul, body, and spirit. The nature of it is strongly intimated in Ezek. xxxvi. There the Lord promises, (1.) to give us a new heart ; (2.) a new spirit ; (3.) to put his Spirit within us ; (4.) to cleanse or save us from all uncleanness ; (5.) to enable us to walk in his statutes, to keep his judgments and do them ; (6.) and “ I will be their God, and they shall be my people,” saith the Lord. Now, what can be more evident, than that when these things are fulfilled in any person, he is, in the Scripture sense, saved from sin ? The promise extends both to the heart and life ; it is exceeding broad. Every faculty of the soul, every passion of the mind, and every affection of the spirit ; every thought, desire, word, and work, and every member of the body ; all must be sanctified throughout : according to the import of the apostolic prayer, “ And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly !” &c. “ Old things are done away ; and, behold, all things are become new !” Our Lord’s love, his beloved ones, are called to be all fair,—to have no spot in them. O believers, pursue your victory, till, being thus “ born of God,” you do “ not commit sin !”

Hear what your Lord saith of his true disciples : “ They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them ” (adds he, in his prayer to the Father) “ through thy truth. For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth : that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. And the glory ” (O how do the words rise !) “ which thou gavest me, I have given them ; that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me,

that they may be made perfect in one!" So extensive, so deep, and so divine is the provision which the Son of God hath made for all who truly believe in, and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth! O may we all thus be filled with Christ, and so made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light!

As to the time of the accomplishment of this work upon the soul, undoubtedly it must be in this world. For there is no work, device, knowledge, or wisdom in the grave, whither we are all hastening. As death leaves a man, so judgment will find him. Christ must wash us *now*, or we can have no part in him hereafter. Nothing that is defiled or unholy, can enter into the kingdom of God. Now is the time wherein we are to work the works of God. We stand or fall eternally, according to the conduct of our lives, and the state in which we are found before we leave this world. The very moment the soul leaves the body it enters into a degree of that happiness or misery which it will experience for ever.

But is this sanctification attainable before death? I will give my opinion: I think it is; and that St. John was partaker of it when he wrote 1 John iv. 17, and many in the church with him. God can save a man at any time of his life. However, it is not for us to set him a time: no man is able to determine how soon, or how late, the Lord may do this, either for himself, or any other person. The duty of all is, to press forward, doing and suffering the will of God, till he takes them to glory! There is no state to which we can possibly arrive, where we are to sit down, as though we could have no more: no; we are still, after all the Lord has done for us, to come to him "as at

first we came," helpless, dependent creatures, for wisdom, righteousness, strength, and holiness. We are safe and holy only in proportion as we receive from the fulness that is in Jesus Christ every moment. He is our Sanctification.

But supposing it pleaseth God, to impart abundantly of his grace to any person, and to save them in such a manner that no wrong desire or temper has any place in them, but they enjoy peace, and love, and power every moment: shall we quarrel with the Lord for this?—because they have not been, it may be, so long in the way of religion, as we judge necessary to such a state? or that it is done perhaps many years before death? God forbid! Nay, rather, let us glorify God on their behalf. Let us press towards the same mark, being deeply persuaded that "the will of God is our sanctification," and that every moment in which we breathe is an acceptable time to look for and expect it.

Before I conclude this point, I would just observe, that although all that are truly saints are cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, yet all have not an equal degree of grace or glory. Salvation being two-fold, consisting in deliverance from evil, and the enjoyment or possession of good; the former may be equal, and indeed must be so, in all who are eternally saved; for no evil thing can dwell with God: yet there is, and will be for ever, a vast disproportion as to the latter. Negative salvation, or deliverance from evil, is a being saved from the guilt, power, and pollution of sin: positive salvation consists in being renewed in the perfect image of God; being possessed of his wisdom, righteousness, holiness, goodness, love,

and immortality, in such a manner as the soul of man is capable of receiving. And although it is true that the negative part of salvation cannot exist without a measure of the other, nevertheless the difference is exceeding great: even as one star differeth from another star in glory, so will be the resurrection of the just. All stars have light, but not equal light: all the saints are made partakers of God and glory, but not all in an equal degree. O blessed are they who are possessed with holy ambition of enjoying as much of God, in earth and heaven, as a creature is capable of enjoying!

That one who is saved from sin may, nevertheless, still increase in holiness and happiness, appears in the instance of our Saviour himself; who, though free from sin, or the least defilement, either in soul or body, yet grew in wisdom, and stature, and in favour with God and man. (Luke ii. 52.) This must necessarily refer to our Lord's humanity. And how could he be said to increase in favour with God, otherwise than as he increased more and more in the divine image, and partook still more abundantly of the divine perfections? God loves his own image; and he loves those in whom it is found, in proportion to the degree of it which they attain. Again, the souls that know God, in this deep sense, whose consciences are purged from all dead works, expand themselves (so to speak) in God, and are still for approaching nearer and nearer to him. Jesus Christ will lead even the glorified saints to fountains of living water; by which we may understand, not only the comfort and joy of the heavenly state, but likewise the ever-fresh and superabundant discoveries which will be made to them of the mys-

tery of Christ and of God ! It is said, we shall then know, even as we are known ; by which, however, cannot be meant, an equality of knowledge in us with God : such a thought would be foolish, if not blasphemous. But it undoubtedly relates to such an increase of divine knowledge and happiness, as we shall never be able to comprehend till we come there, nor to explain even then. No,

“ Not all the archangels can tell
 The joy of that holiest place,
 Where Jesus is pleased to reveal
 The light of his heavenly face ;
 Where, caught in the rapturous blaze,
 The sight beatific they prove,
 And walk in the light of his face,
 And bask in the beams of his love !”

There is no just occasion to explode the doctrine of Christian holiness, under pretence that the preachers of it understand by a perfect man, “ One who can be no better.” So far from thinking so, they affirm, there is no state of grace which does not admit of continual increase ; nay, nor of glory either. Absolute and independent perfection is what no angel in heaven either does or can enjoy ; and how much less man that is a worm, whose foundation is in the dust, and who is crushed before the moth ! There is, strictly speaking, none good but one, according to our Saviour ; and yet, in another sense, our Lord calls a faithful improver of his talent a good servant. In like manner, we may call a person *perfect*, in the scripture sense, who, being saved “ from all filthiness of flesh and spirit,” loves the Lord his God “ with all his

heart, and mind, and soul, and strength." Sure the expression ought not to be quarrelled with, as it occurs so often in Scripture. (See Gen. xvii. 1; Psal. xxxvii. 37; Job. i. 1; Matt. v. 48; Phil. iii. 15; James iii. 2; and many other places.) And as to the thing meant thereby, the word of God is equally express in instructing us therein. If some, indeed, make false, presumptuous, or vain pretences thereto; if some, under exalted notions of liberty and power, turn the grace of God into lasciviousness or wantonness; and if others speak of it in such a manner as cannot be defended on the footing of sober reason, and the doctrine which is according to godliness; yet still, the foundation of God standeth sure, and the promise is most assuredly fulfilled in all who seek this gift of God aright. With regard to all those whose hearts are right with God, and who desire and endeavour to promote the kingdom of Christ, I have been long inclined to think, their differences on this head of perfection are no other than a mere strife of words. May the Lord give all who love our Saviour Christ in sincerity, to think and speak the same thing!

That "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," all that believe the Scriptures allow. And that this holiness is much more than a bare reformation of manners, and the practice of Christian virtues and duties; even an entire renewal in the inmost spirit of our minds; an entire change of heart, tempers, and affections; a thorough renewal in the image of God;—this is also generally acknowledged. And that all this must be done in this world, all Protestants, at least, profess to believe. With regard to the time when it shall be done, how soon, or how late, there is

no authority from Scripture to determine. But all are to wait, expect, desire, and long for it every moment, till death shall put a final end to mortal things.

O! did the saints of God but see the necessity, the beauty, and the excellence of holiness, they would thirst and cry to God, day and night, till he should make them perfect in love; till, being cleansed from all unrighteousness, they should awake up after their Saviour's likeness, and be satisfied with all the fulness of God! Lord, open the eyes of us all, and show us more and more, how exceeding broad the commandment is, and what treasures of grace and glory are in Jesus Christ for all that live and believe in him!

IV. We are, in the last place, to consider, how Christ is made of God unto us Redemption. Redemption includes all the benefits of Christ to mankind, both in this world, and in that which is to come; repentance, pardon, holiness, and glory. We sold ourselves and were destroyed: Christ redeemed and restores us again to the favour of God. The price which he paid was his "precious blood." (1 Pet. i. 18, 19.) "We have redemption in his blood, the forgiveness of sins." (Eph. i. 7.) He gave his soul for our soul; his body for our body; his life for our life. We were shut up as in a pit and prison: Christ, by the blood of his covenant, sets us free. (Zech. ix. 11.) We were insolvent, having nothing to pay, though justice could not acquit us till we paid the uttermost farthing: we were therefore in wretched circumstances, when the Son of God, our Redeemer, undertook for us, bowed the heavens and came down. But he has reconciled all things in heaven and earth. By him mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed

each other. In short, all is ours through Christ. He "is made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification," or, to sum up all in one word, "redemption." He makes us free indeed; he brings us into glorious liberty; the Spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus makes us free from the law of sin and death. He redeems us from all our sins. (Psal. cxxx. 8.) He finishes transgression, and brings in everlasting righteousness.

Christ redeems us from the evil effects of Satan's temptations. Tempted we shall be, even unto death; but, saith our Redeemer, "My grace is sufficient for thee." "The Lord shall bruise Satan under your feet." Again, saith our Lord, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good comfort, I have overcome the world; and in me ye shall have peace." He is our hiding-place from the wind, and our covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, to cool and refresh us; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. (Isaiah xxxii. 2.) He knows how to succour the tempted; he has pity for distressed and disconsolate souls; he makes a way for them to escape; he delivers them from all evil with a mighty hand and a stretched out arm; he is a sun and shield to his saints; he gives them grace and glory!

Lastly: He is our redemption through death, and to eternity. "O death," saith the Lord, "I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction." (Hos. xiii. 14.) He will ransom his people from the power of the grave. He will redeem them from death and hell. As in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive. He is a quickening Spirit, even the resurrection and the life. The bodies of the saints, though

sown in corruption, shall be raised in incorruption; though sown in dishonour, shall be raised in glory; though sown in weakness, they shall be raised in power, and spiritual bodies. (1 Cor. xv. 43, 44.) Thus shall the bodies of the saints be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, according to the mighty power whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself! St. Paul and his brethren groaned for this, even for the redemption of their bodies. (Rom. viii. 23.) And this will be brought to pass when the dead in Christ shall rise, all-glorious, immortal, and divine! And O the beauty, the glory, and the felicity of those who shall rise to the life immortal, and be for ever with the Lord!

This their eternal state will be an everlasting exemption from sin, temptation, pain, tears, sorrow, sickness, and death, and an enjoyment of the light, presence, glory, and eternity of God, the Triune God; in such a manner and degree as eye hath not seen, ear heard, or hath entered into the heart of man adequately to conceive. These followed the Lamb in the regeneration; they drank of their Lord's cup, and were baptized with his baptism; they bore the burden and heat of the day; they had their evil things in this life; but now there is no night of affliction, no wrath from the Almighty, no sting from conscience, no temptation from devils, no painful light of the material sun, no aching of the head or heart, no tears, no curse of any kind; they rest from their labours; they sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with St. Paul and all the Apostles, with all the saints of whom they have read or heard, with innumerable multitudes of nameless and unknown worthies—and O, with Thee, thou

Man of sorrows! Jesus, the crucified! in the kingdom of God their Father.

The Scripture represents the state of the blessed under the most expressive and striking images: things with which men are most delighted in this world, such as crowns, thrones, mansions, honours, pleasures, profits, music, eating, drinking, long life, &c.; and the reason is, because we cannot conceive of those heavenly things otherwise than they are represented to us by visible and sensible things; they point out to us something glorious, noble, blessed, and divine.

We have, indeed, some imperfect conception of these things from what we know of God in this world by faith and love; we see, taste, and enjoy God even now. We now know, love, praise, and rejoice in God in part; and the difference between this and what we shall enjoy above is chiefly in the degree. O, there we shall be lost in the vision of God; the saints shall behold his face, and the glory which Jesus our Saviour had with the Father before the world began: when we have feeling views of our Lord now, by faith, O how does the sight ravish our heart! And hence we may gather in part how we shall be lost, as it were, in rapture at the full blaze of his ineffable brightness and glory. O what clear day will this light cast upon the dark and intricate scenes of time! How many things which are unfathomable to us at present will then be made plain and intelligible! Lord, what can one say of these things! O how desirable a state is it! Who would not wish for an inheritance in that kingdom with the saints in light? O what would it advantage a man to gain the whole world, and lose his part in this kingdom of light and eternal glory! Here

is every thing that is profitable, pleasant, noble, honourable, and glorious. Ye souls of the righteous, bless ye the Lord, praise him, and magnify him for ever: the time of this your redemption draweth nigh: you have received an earnest of it in your hearts. O press towards this mark of your high calling of God in Christ Jesus! Be careful for nothing: look through time to eternity. All is yours; for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God, your Redeemer.

V. Now, briefly to apply the whole: And first, brethren, has Christ been made of God unto you wisdom? Has the veil been yet removed from the word, and from your heart? Have you ever been convinced of your corrupt, guilty, and miserable condition? Have you ever yet known your own heart? All you know beside will not do; it is foolishness with God. Supposing you should know all mysteries in a speculative way; yet, not knowing sensibly the mystery of iniquity that is in your inmost soul, it would avail you nothing. Nay, the more you know of things natural or divine, unless you know yourself and Christ, your knowledge only makes you more like the devil, and will increase your misery. Never expect that Christ shall be thy righteousness, unless thou feelest thyself a poor sinner in need of it; thou must abhor thyself as in dust and ashes. Thou art foolish and slow of heart by nature, averse to good, and prone to evil. See, then, thou dost acknowledge this. Remember, that if any man will be wise in this world, he must become a fool: let him say, "O Lord, I am blind and ignorant; be thou my light and understanding; open my heart, instruct my judgment, and show me what I must do to be saved. Convince me of the heinousness and danger of my sins.

O Lord, let me not perish for lack of knowledge! Become my wisdom, by dispelling my darkness! and causing the true light to shine into my heart." If thou feelest thyself ignorant, and wouldest be informed of the things of God, this is the course thou must take. You must pray to God, who has promised to give wisdom to all that ask it; and it will assuredly be given to thee.

Again: Is Christ become your righteousness? Has he not only shown you your sin, but likewise washed you in his own blood? Feelest thou that thou hast peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ? O look for this! If you know you have nothing to pay,—that God must either save you freely, for his Son's sake, or you must perish everlastingly,—then I invite you to come, guilty as you are; come poor, vile, and ungodly as you are; and the blood of Christ will make you white as snow. Trust not in any work of yours: alas! you have none to trust to. You have broken the whole law in breaking one commandment. Justice demands satisfaction and payment to be made: but thou canst not answer for one of a thousand of thy sins. Now, there is no possible way for you to escape being delivered to the tormentors, sentenced to judgment, and perishing in hell, but by getting righteousness imputed to thee for justification. You must put no confidence in the flesh, but trust alone in the passion of our Lord. Your filthy raiment shall thus be put off, and your soul shall be clothed with the garments of salvation, the robe of Christ's righteousness. "By grace you must be saved, through faith, and that not of yourself, it is the gift of God to every one that believeth."

Believe, therefore, in the Lord Jesus Christ; approach him like the sinful prodigal; implore the Lord to give thee faith in his precious blood, and to put upon thee the best robe; be mindful of that exhortation, (Rom. xiii. 14,) the passage by which St. Austin was converted, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ; and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Till you put him on, you are out of the covenant of God; you are subject every moment to perish everlastingly. O that you may never rest crying unto him till you can truly say, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength!" Behold, *now* is an acceptable time, *this* is a day of salvation: now look unto the Lord and be saved: use all the means, but trust only in Christ the Righteous: so shalt thou find him thy present and eternal Saviour.

And as for you that know the Lord, that are justified through the righteousness of God our Saviour, O see that the work of sanctification goes on in your souls! Examine deeply: do you die daily? and is the life of Christ manifested still more and more within you? Has the Lord ever yet sat upon your heart as a refiner's fire and as fullers' soap, discovering and cleansing your inmost soul from all dead works, and from all the defilement of corruption? You cannot be ignorant that this is your calling. Christ has apprehended you for this very thing, that you should be holy and without blame before him in love. Now, does the love of God spread itself throughout the whole region of your soul, rendering you all-glorious within? O stop not short of this! Seek it as silver, and dig after it as for hidden treasure! A single eye is the way to have your whole body full of light. Alas! how

many are content with no religion at all, or a mere cold form of godliness at most! But you have not so learned Christ; you know that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Talk then with your own heart, and ask, "Am I holy? Has God wrought in me humility of mind? meekness of spirit? resignation to his will? patience towards all men? and love filling the whole soul? Is my heart pure? Do I desire nothing more but God?"

O lay this to heart, and cry to the Lord for entire sanctification! Call to mind, how earnest you were to have your sins forgiven: at least, be as earnest that your nature may be made pure. What is pardon without purity? or bare exemption from the penalty of sin, without entire and everlasting deliverance from every spot and wrinkle of it? Be zealous, then; be watchful; and by the violence of faith and prayer lay hold on the hope set before you.

O believers, ye who are God's heritage and building, in whom he lives and works, lift up your heads; for your redemption is at hand! A few more trials, a few more conflicts with Satan, and the chariot and horsemen of Israel will safely convey you home! This fleshly tabernacle, under which you often groan, shall soon drop off, and your immortal, freed spirit shall unite more perfectly with its Centre! Yea, your frail, corruptible body will shortly be spiritual, glorious, and immortal. Then shall death be swallowed up of life; and God our Redeemer, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all in all. O happy, happy state of glory!

To conclude: Remember that all is given through Christ: He is made of God unto us all these things.

And O what a treasure is ours through him! What a pearl have they found who have found Jesus! You may bless God that ever you were born! O I am lost! I cannot declare a thousandth part of what is in Christ; no, not of one blessing which he bestows. Lo! such clusters of present and eternal blessings are presented to view, that I can only say, "O the depth! O the depth!" Come Lord Jesus, come quickly!

THE DUTY OF PEOPLE'S PRAYING
FOR THEIR MINISTERS.

DISCOURSE V.

2 THESSALONIANS III. 1.

“ FINALLY, BRETHREN, PRAY FOR US, THAT THE WORD OF THE
LORD MAY HAVE FREE COURSE, AND BE GLORIFIED, EVEN
AS IT IS WITH YOU.”

THE fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much; but how much more the faithful, fervent prayers of a whole congregation of Christian people! St. Paul was well assured of this, as, no doubt, he often experienced the happy effects of the people's prayers, both in his own soul and in the success of his ministry. His soul was often replenished with divine power and pure love, while the saints of God made intercession for him, and called down the blessings of heaven upon his preaching the Gospel. It is with good reason, therefore, that St. Paul so frequently requests the

prayers of the churches. With what pressing earnestness does he beg this of the Romans!—"I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me." In the epistle whence the text is taken, he makes it his final request, in behalf of himself and his brethren, "Finally, brethren, pray for us," &c. From which words I shall observe,

I. That the people of God ought to pray for the ministers of Jesus Christ.

II. I shall mention a few of the things in particular for which prayer should be made in their behalf.

I. The ministers of Christ need to be prayed for on several accounts. 1. They are men of like passions with others. This was St. Paul's argument to the priests of Jupiter at Lystra, to dissuade them from sacrificing to him and Barnabas as unto gods. "Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you," &c. (Acts xiv.) The ministers of Christ are sinners, and children of wrath by nature, even as others. They have the same natural corruption, and have been, in this respect, as far from God as any of their hearers: add to this, that they are exposed to many more temptations and severer trials than private Christians.

Some people think very highly of the ministers of Christ, as though they were free from the temptations and trials which other souls are exposed to; and that their very calling implies a distance from Satan and oppositions in the way to heaven, which others are afflicted with. But how great a mistake is this! All who think so are certainly unskilful in the word of

righteousness. People are ready to expect something more than human, at least very extraordinary, from ministers; even as though there was something inherently holy in the very profession. No man, indeed, should, by any means, take upon him the office of preaching the Gospel till he is himself a partaker of the precious faith of the Gospel; till, after a feeling sense of sin, and a true experience of the free mercy of God in Christ, he can declare to others the eternal and essential truths of God. Yet we find by experience, that many whom the Lord calls and blesses in the work of the ministry are no other than babes in Christ; and often, it may be, feel less faith and love, less peace and joy, than many of their hearers: on this account the people should pray earnestly for all those who speak to them in the name of the Lord.

2. Beside, their work is great; and, alas! who is sufficient for these things? Who is sufficient, and who will not tremble at the thoughts of such a charge, that deeply considers the Holy Ghost's description of the ministers of God? They are called to preach the word; to be instant in season, and out of season; to reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine; to do the work of an evangelist, and make full proof of their ministry,—who are able to approve themselves the ministers of God in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report;

as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, and yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things. You may from hence learn, in part, the difficulty of maintaining the true character of a minister of Christ; and the need they have of the prayers of the children of God.

What an awful undertaking is it for any one to be God's ambassador! No one can fully know this but those who are faithful labourers in the vineyard of Christ, who bear the burden and heat of the day. It is true, there are some who run before they are sent, that do the work of the Lord deceitfully or slightly, and, therefore, think the preaching of the Gospel to be no other than an easy way of getting a living: these are displeasing to God, and do not profit the people. But the real servants of God, to whom to live and preach is Christ, find it both weighty and laborious; the most important charge in the world.

3. Another reason why people ought to pray for their ministers is, because they watch for their souls, so that even gratitude requires this of them as a debt: they should not be forgotten by us who labour night and day for our profit. Whatever light or experience a preacher receives from God, he receives it not for himself alone, but that the people, likewise, might profit thereby. God fills them with his light and truth to the intent that they should, as it were, empty themselves among the people. How earnest, how importunate, then, should the hearers be, how fervent and constant in their addresses to God, that his servants who speak to them in his name might be thoroughly

furnished to every good word and work; that they may have the tongue of the learned, and with the demonstration of the Holy Spirit set forth the unsearchable riches of Christ!

To be without natural affection to parents and kindred is base, and condemned of all men: to want love to the messengers of God argues a wrong heart, and is ungenerous and ungrateful to a high degree. Ministers, indeed, should not seek either the love or honour that cometh from man; yet all who through their word are made partakers of Christ should greatly love, honour, and esteem them for their work's sake, as being ambassadors from God, and messengers of peace to their souls. The faithful labourers count themselves debtors to all, and account not their lives dear unto themselves, but are willing to spend and be spent in the service of God, in bringing sinners to Christ; and yet it often happens that the more abundantly they love, the less they are loved. Shameful ingratitude! that those who are willing to lay down their life, who joy and rejoice to be, as it were, offered up upon the sacrifice and service of the faith of the people, should nevertheless be neglected in their prayers!

Christ walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks, that is, the churches; but he holds the stars, the ministers of the churches, in his right hand: they are precious to Christ, and whosoever despiseth the least of his messengers, despiseth Christ that sent them. Our Lord affirms of his real ministers, "He that heareth you heareth me." O what manner of persons then ought they to be whose speaking and doctrine Christ reputes as his own! Lord, increase our faith! "Brethren, pray for us."

4. The consideration of the fruit of faithful labourers, and of the evil consequences of their miscarrying, is another reason why people should pray for the ministers of the Gospel. If they continue faithful, labouring in the word and doctrine, much glory redounds to God thereby, as well as profit both to saints and sinners; whereas, on the other hand, if they be found unfaithful, the cause of God, the credit of religion, and the progress of the Gospel suffer much on their account.

The devil is very assiduous to overturn the faith of the weakest believer in Christ; but more especially does he labour to overthrow the ministers of Christ: he opens his mouth wide, stirs up many adversaries, and goeth about like a roaring lion, to devour those servants of God who labour day and night to vanquish sin and promote the kingdom of God. The devil has a most irreconcilable enmity against every son of thunder who is instrumental to awakening sinners, and every son of consolation who builds up the saints. St. Paul laboured more abundantly than the other Apostles, and he also suffered more than any of them. (2 Cor. xi. 23, &c.) The grand adversary triumphs at the very design of cutting off a General from the militant church. The ungodly, who sit in the seat of the scornful, and make a mock at sin, hate all the true followers of Christ; though in a particular manner they hate and despise them that preach the faithful word. Like Ahab, they say, "We hate these men; for they never prophesy good concerning us, but evil." (1 Kings xxii. 18.)

The devil, the world, wicked men, evil spirits, all conspire and combine to assault, persecute, or even kill the faithful preachers of Christ. The great good

that has been often done by one faithful minister, and the great evil, on the contrary, which often has been done by one evil minister, have been both heard and seen. O what need have the preachers of the Gospel to be prayed for! If a preacher falls, he does not fall alone: by his fall many are wounded, many turned out of the way of righteousness. Alas! when the shepherd is smitten, how are the sheep scattered! how does the wolf come in among them! How prosperous and how flourishing do faithful watchmen make the church of Christ, while day and night they cry upon her walls, and keep not silence, proclaiming to saints and sinners the whole will of God; while they distribute to each his portion of meat in due season! O how should every heart be lifted up, saying, "Lord, Lord, be a sun and a shield; be for light and for defence unto thy servants; preserve their own souls; stand by them and confirm their word; open unto them a door of utterance, nor let the powers of earth nor hell prevail against them!"

5. And, moreover, it is not only for those who are already employed in the word and doctrine that the people should pray, but they should also beseech the Lord of the harvest to send forth more labourers into the harvest; that he speaking the word, great may be the company of the preachers.

Alas! what multitudes are perishing for lack of knowledge! And by whom shall they be instructed and saved? Lord, thou knowest. O send forth thy light and thy truth! Anoint and appoint for preaching the gospel men who shall not count their lives dear unto themselves, but who shall gladly spend and be spent for the good of souls. How shall sinners hear without

a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent by thee?—by thee, whose mission to every messenger of thine is, “As my Father sent me, even so send I you?” All that ever came before thee, before they were appointed and approved by thee, were thieves and robbers, and therefore did not, could not, profit the people. Lord, save us from “that wonderful and horrible thing!” (Jer. v. 30, 31.) Thus you see some few reasons why the ministers of Christ need your prayers.

II. I come, in the second place, to speak of the things which should especially be prayed for in their behalf; or, what may be the matter of the people’s prayers for their ministers. And they are such as respect, 1. The state of their ministers’ souls: 2. The success of their labours. The dangers, temptations, and trials to which ministers in a peculiar manner are exposed, have been briefly touched upon already, and should be so many motives to stir up the children of God to unceasing prayer in their behalf. Did people but know what the servants of God go through in their own mind; what conflicts they often feel with wicked spirits, the powers of darkness in general; through what fire and water they often wade to, keep a good conscience and to bring souls to the wealthy place; O they would cry mightily to Heaven in their behalf! They would frequently say, “Lord, spare them; strengthen, uphold, and sustain their spirits; suffer not thy servants to faint or flag; arm them with thy armour; make them strong to labour and patient to suffer. O let them conquer through thy blood; and, having fully preached the Gospel to others, let not themselves be cast away!”

As to the things to be prayed for, respecting the Gospel, the text mentions one or two particulars. "Pray for us," saith the Apostle, "that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, even as it is with you." But when may the word of the Lord be said to run and be glorified?

1. When the preachers of the Gospel have a door of utterance opened unto them, and are enabled to speak the word without fear; when it is given them to preach with the demonstration of the Spirit and with power, to make known the unsearchable riches of Christ, and declare the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. A minister has need to be well furnished for the edification of the body of Christ, his church. We know that if the blind lead the blind, both must fall into the ditch. If the prophets prophesy falsely, or if they are, according to the Prophet's words, "dumb dogs, which cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, and loving to slumber," how must the people then be destroyed, or left a prey to the destroyer of souls!

The ignorant and the ungodly like those preachers best who make the way to heaven broad and smooth, and heal slightly the wound of the daughter of God's people. But surely all who love their own souls should beseech God to give them powerful, heart-searching ministers; men of sound judgment, zeal, and integrity; that the word of the Lord, in their mouth, may be as a hammer and fire, and may thus run and be glorified.

2. The word may be said to be glorified when it is powerful, through God, to the awakening of sinners; when the sword of the Spirit enters into the inmost souls of the ungodly, piercing them with a deep sense

of their guilt, misery, and helplessness; when it constrains them to cry out, "What shall we do to be saved?" "Who shall deliver us from the body of this death?" The word of the Lord is of sovereign efficacy, it has a particular energy, and prevails to awaken and comfort souls where all human means fail. The Gospel is the word of a king, it has majesty, it bears down all before it, and is glorified in its victorious conquest over all opposition from earth and hell.

3. The word of the Lord is also glorified when the broken heart is bound up, and mourning sinners are comforted thereby: it not only kills but likewise makes alive; it is the word of reconciliation as well as of condemnation. As there are various and terrible threatenings to the ungodly, so there are exceeding great and precious promises to all returning penitent sinners: the Gospel "is the power of God unto salvation;" (Rom. i. 16;) "faith" generally "comes by hearing." It is wonderful what a blessed virtue and sweetness there is in those glad tidings of the Gospel which its ministers sinking wretched sinners. O who can fully set forth the tender mercy, the free love and overflowings of compassion, that are treasured up in God our Saviour, and published by the messengers of peace for the comfort and encouragement of all returning sinners! O how do guilty rebels rejoice when Christ crucified, bearing their sins, and shedding his heart's blood for them, is fully declared and offered for their acceptance! Well may such cry out, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Glory, glory be to God in the highest! Blessed be God for Christ Jesus, through whom we find there is mercy for us and plenteous redemption! Redemption for us, the outcasts of men!

O astonishing grace!" There comes a voice from Mount Sion, crying, "Sinners, be of good courage; your sins are forgiven you." And if the voice from Sinai made them fear and tremble, this from Sion enables them to believe and rejoice: and thus in the comforting of sinners is the word of the Lord glorified.

4. The word of the Lord runs and is glorified when saints are thereby built up in their most holy faith. While the servants of God speak the truth in love, the saints grow up into Christ in all things, who is their living head, and from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

To repent and believe the Gospel is something great and blessed; and, O, happy for all those who have attained thereto! But still, we are not to stop here: we must grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; we must add unto our faith virtue, courage, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. Whosoever lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off; but whoso doeth these things shall never fall. (2 Pet. i. 5, 10.) O how lovely, how desirable a sight is it to see "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing!"

5. Still further: The word of the Lord is glorified by its fruitful progress, the spreading abroad of the Gospel throughout the different regions of the universe, and its powerful effects throughout the whole soul of every believer. Its beginnings are often small; but

the grain of mustard-seed becomes a great tree. A little one becomes a thousand; and a small one a strong nation. O what a glorious instance of the progress of the Gospel is that we read of in Acts ii. !—three thousand converted under one sermon! yea, the word daily ran, and was glorified, by the obedience of multitudes to the faith. Lord, we look for a time when all the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of thy glory; when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God, and of his Christ; when all nations shall flow to the Lord; when the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established upon the tops of the mountains, and all flesh shall see the salvation of our God; when all shall love thee, with all their heart, and mind, and soul, and strength. O God, hasten the time!

It is true, that whenever a work of God begins in any place, or upon any soul, the devil raises a tempest to overthrow it. (See Rev. xii. 4.) He is continually devising how he may most effectually hinder the work of God. He raises offences, bestrews stumbling-blocks, invents lies, and fills the world with reproaches against those that preach and those that hear the Gospel. Wherever the seed of the serpent lives, it will stir and rise up against the interests of Christ and his kingdom, and so against the powerful preaching of the word of God. While men, indeed, are careless and secure, Satan seems to withdraw, and does not much assault them. But when his interests are weakening, and his kingdom begins to shake, then doth the strong man bestir himself and rages horribly. (See Acts xix.) Consider, how the true servants of God, in general, have suffered since the beginning of the world:

through Christ, however, they were more than conquerors. He is the mighty God, and will get himself the victory over hell, and earth, and sin !

We see then what are the things, with respect especially to the preaching the Gospel, for which we ought to pray: namely, that the word of the Lord may convince and convert sinners ; that saints may be thereby built up in their most holy faith ; and that all the ends of the earth may see the salvation of our God !

And surely every sincere Christian, every lover of God and his neighbour, is disposed to make supplication for all men. Every one who has “tasted that the Lord is gracious,” having “felt the good word, and the powers of the world to come,” cannot but desire and pray that others may partake of the like blessings. They long to have friends and enemies, Jews and Gentiles, the whole world, brought into the fold of Christ, and made happy in their God. And hence, in a peculiar manner, they do and ought to pour out their hearts to God in behalf of his ministering servants. Both Christian preachers and Christian people conspire together to bring sinners to repentance and salvation.

III. And now, ye saints of God, ye children of the kingdom, will ye not pray for your teachers? Will you not wrestle with the Lord in mighty prayer, that he would inspire and bless them? They love you, and seek you for God alone. They spend and are spent on the service of your faith ; and require only this of you in return, that you would constantly and earnestly recommend them to God in your prayers. You are not to expect great things from them ; but are to look

through them to the only Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, the Lord Jesus Christ. You are to follow them only so far as they follow Christ, and to receive his message from their lips; not indeed with a blind, implicit obedience but so far only as it agrees with the word of God. And then, you should regard the true messengers of Christ, even as the angels of God. The word which they preach will judge you in the last day. By it you must stand or fall for ever. It will be a swift witness against all who despise it; for "Who despiseth you, despiseth me," saith Christ. O "take heed" then "how ye hear!"

How can any of you say, you have zeal for God, or are his children, who do not call mightily upon the Lord in behalf of his servants that labour in the vineyard; who do not pour out your souls, that his light and truth may be made known upon the earth, and his saving health unto all nations? It is a good mark that a person has tasted of the good word, when his heart bleeds for the salvation of all. O for that spirit to wish, in St. Paul's sense and words, to be even accursed for the sake of those who are strangers and enemies to the God of heaven, and to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ! Be assured, if your heart is not often deeply affected at the misery of mankind, and with desire for their salvation, it is a sign you have never yet rightly felt your own misery, and much less been partakers of the rich grace of God for the forgiveness of your sins and for your union with Christ. O if you had, you would thirst for the happiness of the human race as he did!

The last use I shall make of the words of the text is this: Let every preacher of Christ consider the need

he has of the prayers of the faithful. Did Paul the aged, who was caught up into paradise, heard the words and received the instructions of the Son of God himself; did he think the prayers of the churches so needful for him, and so frequently beg for them? And should not we,—we who are not worthy of a name among his servants,—shall not we seek this assistance also? Lord, what helps do we want! O let us not be high-minded; let us not think, because we stand at the head of a congregation, and teach others, that therefore we need not be taught ourselves; or are so strong, that we need not the help of others. Alas! we need the prayers of “the weakest beginner in Jesus’s love.” May we think soberly of ourselves! May we follow the example of St. Paul, and all the primitive true servants of God; “keeping under” our “body, and bringing it into subjection, lest, after having preached to others,” we ourselves “should be cast away!”

O let us consider our high and holy calling, the trials we have to encounter, and the trust reposed in us! Let us endeavour to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, even as ourselves. Let us renounce the friendship and glory of this world. Let us enlighten and instruct by our conversation, as well as thunder from the word in our preaching. The chief Shepherd will soon appear, and require an account of our stewardship. If we are but faithful, then, though Israel be not gathered, though our success be small, our persons obscure, and our labours made no account of, yet our reward is with the Lord, and our recompence shall be from our God.

Let us then, every one, hear our Lord speaking to us and saying, “Stir up the gift of God that is in

thee. Be faithful to thy charge. Cry aloud ; spare not : lift up your voice like a trumpet. Fight the good fight : finish your course : be faithful unto death ! So shall I not be ashamed to account you my brethren, and cause you to share with me in the joys of that last presentation,—‘ Lo ! here am I, and the children whom thou hast given me.’”

“ Finally, brethren, pray for us,” that we may be thus presented with you to God, and shine as the stars for ever and ever ! And may he preserve you blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his saints ! Even so, Lord Jesus !

LOVE, THE END OF THE COMMAND- MENT.

DISCOURSE VI.

1 TIMOTHY I. 5.

“NOW THE END OF THE COMMANDMENT IS CHARITY OUT OF A PURE HEART, AND OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE, AND OF FAITH UNFEIGNED.”

“ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God ; and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness ;” and whosoever reads with understanding is thereby made wise to salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus. We find, by comparing spiritual things with spiritual, that some parts of holy Scripture exceed others in depth and extensiveness of signification, as much as one star differeth from another in glory. It is plain that some parts of it are more fitted to make known the will of God to men, and the way wherein they should go, than others ; as for example, the Scriptures of the New Testament are in this respect preferable to those of the Old Testament. God is pleased in some places to

reveal to us his whole will, concerning the way of salvation in a few chapters, as in the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel. Sometimes in one sentence, or verse; as Deut. xii. 10; Micah vii. 6; John xvii. 3; and in the words before us, in which we have a summary view and description of the very essence of pure and undefiled religion. "The end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."

Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, they are all contained in these few words of St. Paul. Here is a most sure and steadfast foundation laid; and a most amiable, solid, and permanent superstructure built thereon. St. Paul, in this, and in all his epistles, makes Christ the foundation of every good thing, and builds on him, gold, silver, and precious stones; every thing virtuous, holy, and happy; things more desirable than gold, more precious than rubies, and sweeter than honey and the honey-comb.

The occasion of these words was this,—There were some teachers at Ephesus who preached divers and strange doctrines; Jewish fables, and endless genealogies; men that raised questions about the law and traditions among the Jews, which served only to subvert the hearers, and ministered to pride and vanity, rather than godly edifying which is in faith. To reprove and humble these vain men, the Apostle, in these few words, laying all these contentions aside, sums up the whole of the doctrine of godliness. "Now the end of the commandment is charity,"—

αγάπη, *love*; the love of God and man, filling the soul of a believer; which love must spring from “a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned:” from which commandment (or charge of preaching the Gospel, as the word implies) the fore-mentioned teachers having turned away, they were employed in vain jangling, and not in preaching Christ crucified, which alone can profit the soul.

And although the original words may be considered as primarily referring to the charge of preaching the Gospel, nevertheless, the truth of their signification respects all the commandments of God; for “love is the fulfilling of the” whole “law.” (Rom. xiii.) I shall therefore, from these words, discourse on the nature of pure and undefiled religion: in order to which, we may invert the order of the words. St. Paul’s manner in describing the whole of the truth which is according to godliness, is, to begin either at the top or at the bottom of the Christian fabric, and so descends, or ascends, accordingly. Examples of this we have in 1 Cor. i. 30, and vi. 11, and xiii. 13; 1 Thess. i. 5, and v. 23. So, in the text, he mentions love as the end of the commandment; but this love must proceed from a “pure heart;” which implies a “good conscience,” and “faith unfeigned,” as the ground of all. I shall begin with,

I. Faith unfeigned; and proceed to treat, in order, of,

II. A good conscience.

III. A pure heart.

IV. Love, the end of the commandment.

I. I am first to speak of “faith unfeigned.” And it highly concerns every one rightly to understand the

nature of true, living faith. We are told, that “without faith it is impossible to please God,” and that by faith the elders, the patriarchs, holy prophets, and primitive servants of God in general, obtained a good report; and it is by faith, that all true Christians stand in the favour of God, and are promised eternal life. To be fully informed, as to the necessity and fruit of faith, one needs only to read, with understanding, and deeply consider, Gen. xv. 6; Psalm xxvii. 13; Hab. ii. 4; Mark xvi. 16; John xi. 25, 26; Rom. iv. 5, and v. 1, and x. 4; Heb. xi. 6.

If we give due heed to these scriptures, we shall soon see the necessity of that direction, (2 Cor. xiii. 5,) “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.” But how may this be done? How shall a person be assured that his faith is the very true, Christian, saving faith? There is no other way of determining this, but by trying our faith by “the law and by the testimony.” God, who hath been pleased to ordain faith as the condition or instrument of salvation, hath likewise condescended, of his great mercy, to give us a clear account of its nature and properties. Our best and surest method is, therefore, to attend to the accounts which the Scripture gives us of this matter. And we may find there particularly described, 1. The author of this faith; 2. Its true and immediate object, as justifying the sinner; 3. The subject of it; and, 4. Its fruit or effects. We may speak a little of each.

1. The author of true saving faith is the eternal God; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. (Col. ii. 12; Heb. xii. 2; James i. 17; Ephes. ii. 8.) Faith is an especial gift of God; it is he bestows it on poor sinners.

Man has no power to work it in himself; neither has he the least goodness to merit it from God. The Holy Spirit works it in our hearts, being given freely of the Father, through the merits of his Son. A man may have a speculative, historical faith, by hearing, reading, and the like, which may be said to be "his own." He may change his religious system, and embrace what some call "the faith;" all which, being a mere human thing, and in the power of every one to do at pleasure, does nothing at all advantage the soul. Yea, one may assent to all the things contained in holy Scripture, and yet be destitute of this "faith unfeigned" spoken of in the text. This does not grow in nature's garden. It is not every one that saith unto Jesus, "Lord, Lord," that has this precious, this invaluable treasure of faith. It is not produced by argument from others; nor is it the result of mere study or speculation in ourselves. But it is the work and gift of him that speaketh in righteousness, who is mighty to save. It is his gift to every poor conscious unbeliever. "It is the gift of God." (Eph. ii. 8.)

2. The object of faith, as justifying the sinner, is God in Christ. (2 Cor. v. 19.) It looks especially to Christ, living, dying, reigning, and rising. Though still more particularly, the faith of a sinner fixes itself chiefly upon Jesus in agonies! extended upon the cross, bleeding to death for *his* redemption! Nothing so breaks the heart of a sinner as this; and nothing so effectually heals every sadness, every sickness of the soul. And the help which the sinner receives from this, from believing in Christ, as dying for him, is not, at least very rarely, if ever, the result of forced speculations on the head. But in our extremity,

when we know not what shall become of us, and in confusion are looking about for help, we know not where, the Holy Ghost presents before our heart Jesus Christ, evidently set forth, crucified for *us*! We are confounded, and cry out, "My Lord, and my God!" Our faith fastens upon him! We cleave to him, and are instantly made happy.

Now the soul sees all in Christ, and from this time esteems every thing as dung and dross in comparison of Christ Jesus its Lord. Now we discern the covenant of grace, and the promises of God sealed to us by the blood of the Lamb. The soul now wholly and heartily confides in the blood and righteousness of Christ. Faith shows that God doth not, will not, save the sinner, but through Christ. Faith, fixing upon him, brings the soul to Christ, and Christ to the soul.

3. The subject or seat of this faith, is the heart of a justified sinner. So saith St. Paul, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." The understanding and will are mainly concerned. The "true light" shines into our soul, and discovers our disordered, dangerous state: we become sensible of the guilt, misery, helplessness, and danger in which sin has involved us. We likewise discover the love, willingness, and all-sufficiency of Christ to save. We see with our eyes, hear with our ears, understand with our hearts, are converted and saved. We embrace the Lord's method of saving us, and find rest to our souls.

For although, as has been hinted, the very article of our finding deliverance from the guilt and condemnation of sin, be not the result of reasoning or argu-

ment, but the immediate effect of the Holy Spirit's operation ; nevertheless, we perceive, on attending to it, that there is the utmost reason for every thing which God hath commanded us either to believe or do. The Spirit of God enlightens our understanding, and shows us that all he enjoins is our reasonable service. We see particularly that it is altogether just and reasonable, that we should trust in Christ alone for life and salvation.

And as God enlightens the understanding to perceive the unsearchable riches of Christ ; so doth he also incline the will, and enables the sinner to lay hold on Christ. Perceiving that he must perish, unless the blood of Christ saves him, the sinner is willing to come to Christ for all he wants. He trusts in him for life, justification, holiness, and heaven. And now, the heart believing unto righteousness, confession is made from a willing mind, with the mouth, unto salvation.

The fruits or effects of this faith are what I would chiefly insist upon ; for it is by knowing these, that we can safely judge of our own state, and are enabled to make a right judgment of the faith we profess. And, first, justification is a fruit of true faith. Whoever rightly believes is justified from all things ; he has received the forgiveness of all his sins. (Gen. xv. 6 ; Acts xiii. 39 ; Rom. iv. 5, and v. 1.) Pardon, acceptance, reconciliation, (all which, indeed, amount to the same thing,) are the fruit of true faith.

There is no condemnation to them that believe in Christ Jesus. He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. All the prophets give their testimony to this truth, that whosoever believeth in Christ receives the remission of sins. (Acts

x.) Whoever reads with attention and prayer the following scriptures, will needs allow, that all those who have true faith, have therewith the forgiveness of sins. (John xi. 26; Acts x. 43, and xiii. 39, and xvi. 31; Rom. iv. 5, and v. 1, and viii. 1, and x. 4; Ephes. ii. 8, and iv. 32; 1 John v. 12, 13.) No one can, in the proper, evangelical sense, be said to be a believer, unless he has "redemption in the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins."

2. A second fruit of the true Christian faith is, clearness of evidence concerning our state of acceptance with God. All that rightly believe can say with humble boldness, "We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. viii. 15, 16.) St. John saith, "He that believeth in the Son of God hath the witness in himself;" even that witness, that he is passed from death unto life. "We have received," saith St. Paul, "not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." (1 Cor. ii. 12.) Our sins are not only pardoned, on our believing in Jesus, but he also ascertains our conscience that they are pardoned. He writes it upon our hearts, "I am merciful to thine unrighteousness. I have blotted out thy sins as a cloud, and thine iniquity as a thick cloud." We believe it, and rejoice in his love. The believer feels he has peace with God; having withal a divine consciousness or persuasion of his title to eternal life, through him that hath loved us. His language is, "Lord Jesus, thou hast died for my sins,

and hast washed me from all guilt in thy most precious blood. Thou art my beloved, and I am thine; and I cannot but love and praise thee!"

How indeed can any one have the remission of sins, and not know it? Is not the state of justification, like light after darkness, life after death, strength after weakness; in short, heaven after hell? Now, if the blind cannot receive their sight, the dead be raised to life, the sorrowful comforted, the sick healed, and the weak strengthened, without their knowledge of it; so neither can a sinner be converted to God without knowing that he is so. We *taste*, we *see*, that the Lord is gracious! His love is shed abroad in our heart; and the believer rejoices in hope of the glory of God!

3. Faith unfeigned purifies the heart. It derives from Christ's fulness grace to renew us in the spirit of our minds, after the likeness of him that created us. As faith is the condition of justification, so is it likewise the instrument of sanctification; (Acts xv. 9, and xxvi. 18;) "purifying their hearts by faith." That they may receive "an inheritance among them that are sanctified, by faith that is in me," saith our Lord. The faith of the Gospel is a working principle, and includes sanctification in its very nature. We are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath prepared for us to walk in. Continuing to believe, all old things are done away, and every part becomes new. All we are must be brought into subjection to God. By faith we are born of God, and partake of the divine nature, till we are without spot and blameless. Faith quenches all the fiery darts of the devil, overcomes the world, subdues sin, gives

power to the faint, bears many burdens, doeth all things willingly, renders us and all we do in his service acceptable to God. Whereas, without faith we can please him in nothing we do. The works of a child of God are done in faith, and receive a reward from God.

Whosoever thus abideth in Christ sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not. How should they that are dead to sin live any longer therein? Knowing this, that the old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. The Son hath made the believer free, and he is free indeed!

4. A farther fruit or effect of true faith is, obedience to all the commandments of Christ. He that believeth loveth; and love will labour and do, if possible, even more than is commanded. "If any man love me," saith Jesus, "he will keep my words. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings."

Now, then, before we proceed any farther, let me beseech you, brethren, to "examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith." Have you ever been convinced of sin; above all, of the sin of unbelief? This is, in a particular manner, the damning sin. It binds all other sins upon the soul; it keeps a man under the curse, and shuts him out of heaven. (See Mark xvi. 16, and John iii. 18, 36.) You may be assured, if you never had any doubts whether you are a believer or no, you are an unbeliever to this hour, and the wrath of God abideth upon you. O do not think that you were born a believer; or at least that you are a

believer since your baptism! Your first birth brought you into the world a child of wrath. (Eph. ii. 3.) And as to the benefits of your baptism, they are long ago made null and void by your sinning against God; so that your baptism is become unbaptism (so to speak): you were conceived in sin, and born under condemnation and it is plain, your baptism has not altered the case, if now you live in sin. All avails nothing without faith working by love, or a new creature. O do not trust in vain words! Call not notions, professions, and opinions by the name of faith. It is not a system or scheme of doctrines that can advantage your soul. No; you must renounce yourself, come out of yourself, and seek from God a faith of the operation of his Holy Spirit, that your sins may be blotted out, and your soul truly converted.

Has God, I ask again, shown thee thy want of faith in Christ? Didst thou ever feel the heavy yoke of sin a sore burden, too heavy for thee to bear? And hast thou groaned to be delivered? Hath the Lord ever done with thee as with the once persecuting Saul, or any thing similar thereto? (See Acts ix; Rom. vii; Phil. iii.) This poor sinner thought he had faith enough, because he was outwardly conformable to the law, and enjoyed all the privileges of a Jew; but when Christ spoke to his heart, he found he had not the true faith, and was under the curse of the law; he saw his nakedness of righteousness, and submitted to be saved by the grace and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ; he counted all things dung and dross, that he might win Christ, and be found in him at the last day. May the God of all grace work on thee in

like manner, that thou also mayest be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus !

II. The second thing to be considered, is a "good conscience." This indeed is a necessary attendant on "faith unfeigned." And without it, it is impossible for any one to be truly happy. Unless a person has the testimony of his conscience, that in all things he seeks to do the will of God, he can have no solid joy, nor true confidence towards God. Now, a good conscience implies two things:—1. That it be sprinkled by the blood of Christ; and, 2. That it be tender. St. Paul exhorts the Hebrews to draw near to God with a true heart; and adds, (intimating, that it is impossible to do this, without what follows,) "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

Every one is conscious to himself that he has sinned. We cannot survey our life without seeing that we have variously and grievously offended, and are accountable to God for all we have done. It is said of the Jews, (John viii.,) that they were convicted by their own conscience: the same is said of the Gentiles. (Rom. ii.) Their conscience accused them. An evil conscience is that "worm that never dieth:" it is a wound, and a sting, to every one that hath it; and no man has a good conscience by nature. It must therefore be sprinkled by the blood of Jesus, in order to become good. A sinner may endeavour to still and hush the clamours of his evil conscience; he may stupify and harden it; but it will awake, sooner or later. The worm will never die till it be killed by the blood of Christ.

How did Belshazzar's heart ache! How did he

tremble, and his strength fail, because his thoughts, or conscience, troubled him! (Dan. v. 5, 6.) No, a sinner cannot fly from himself; he carries his own hell within him. "There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God." (Isaiah lvii. 21.) O what misery must a guilty sinner feel in his own breast! How is he griped and torn, as it were, by the dogs of hell! especially when he thinks of death and judgment! A guilty conscience who can bear? And guilty it must be, till that healing, cleansing balm be applied to it,—the precious stream of the Saviour's blood! This it is that purifies us from dead works, to serve the living God. (Heb. ix.) In vain are other medicines applied to help. A man may weep, and fast, and pray; he may read, communicate, and give alms; all of which are good in their place: but unless he goes farther, the hurt of his soul will be healed but slightly. When the spirit of judgment and of burning comes to try every man's work as by fire, O then nothing can screen from ruin and wrath, but a purgation by the blood of Jesus Christ!

Come then, fly to this fountain, and wash away your guilt and corruption! Rest not, till you are assured your sins are all blotted out, and you are at peace with God! A good conscience will then arise from unfeigned faith, from a sense of God's favour. This gives peace and joy to the conscience, and emboldens the soul to draw near to God. This is the first thing implied in a good conscience, to have all our sins blotted out; namely, by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ; by a saving power, and sensible application of the merits of the Redeemer, to the guilty conscience of a poor condemned sinner.

2. A good conscience is also a tender conscience. It is not only free from a terrifying sense of guilt; but also susceptible of the tenderest impressions, and jealous of the least defection. A good conscience is sensible of every sin, either of omission or commission. Whoever would have true confidence towards God, must keep his heart with all diligence, and be exactly careful that his conscience has nothing to condemn him for, nor reproach him with. Then only can we have just confidence towards God, when our heart condemns us not. (1 John iii. 21.) Happy is the man that condemneth not himself in the thing which he alloweth! Alas! in vain do all the world approve, when one is condemned of himself; as, on the other hand, though multitudes should censure and condemn, yet, if one's conscience acquits, there is tranquillity in the midst of obloquy. A good conscience, as saith the proverb, is a continual feast. And saith St. Paul, "This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." (2 Cor. i. 12.)

A tender conscience is careful, not only with respect to the commission of sin, and omissions of duty, but likewise as to every motion of the grace of God, the visitations of the Holy Spirit, and the carriage of the soul towards its God :

" Jealous lest earth should claim a part,
Or aught disseize him of his own."

A tender conscience hearkens with attention to what the Lord has to say to it; and evermore desires,

“ Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.” Whosoever is possessed of this serves God with a perfect heart and a willing mind. They are careful, by all righteousness and true holiness, to keep a conscience void of offence, both towards God and towards man. They labour in all things to “ do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.”

Now then, I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to deal faithfully with your own souls ; and examine well your conscience in the presence of God. Is your conscience purged from the guilt and filth of sin ? Can you be ignorant of the odious nature of sin, and of the sad consequences that attend it ? Is it not a piercing, killing dart ? Is it not a contagious poison ; and does it not leave a mortal wound in the conscience ? How then can you be at rest, till you are helped and healed by the softening, cleansing efficacy of the grace and blood of the Lord Jesus ?

But it may be, your conscience is quiet ; not as being healed and purged by the blood of Christ, but because you are fast asleep, insensible of your sin and misery. O may God awake thee, and cause thee to see and feel thy guilt and wretchedness ! May he cause thy guilty conscience to smart within thee, till it be effectually purged by Christ’s blood !

But if thy conscience be troubled for thy sins, perhaps thou art endeavouring to quiet it by thy own good works. But, alas ! herein likewise, you are deceiving your own soul. O settle it in your heart, that nothing which you can do can wash away your sins, heal any wound, or conquer any lust of thy heart ! I tell you plainly, if Jesus Christ does not apply his own righteousness to thy poor, perishing soul, thou must

perish everlastingly. And do not content yourself with saying, you *hope* your sins are forgiven, and that your conscience is purged. See that you get a sure evidence thereof. Be not content with a “peradventure.” Ask of God, and he will write forgiveness and stamp purity upon your heart. On the one hand, call to mind the many, grievous, and damnable sins you have committed. Consider their aggravated guilt, and how they arraign you before the throne of God. And, on the other hand, call to mind the infinite love and patience of God, in sparing you, and still inviting you to pardon and glory. And O fly to Christ, the righteous, who is the propitiation for thy sins; and earnestly and humbly implore him to forgive you, and restore to you a good conscience!

You know the Bible requires we should love God with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength: and now I pray you, how can your conscience acquit you till you do so? And how can you thus love God, till by faith you know that he hath loved you, and is reconciled unto you? Again, the Lord requires that we should do all things to his glory: how then is it possible to rejoice in the testimony of a good conscience, till the eye be made single, and one’s soul is so awake that it is sensible of the smallest deviation from the will of God? Is your conscience tender? Does it reprove you for an idle thought, an unnecessary word? Have you a keen conviction of whatever you think, or speak, or do contrary to the will of God, or when you neglect doing to the utmost of your power whatsoever he hath commanded? O examine faithfully, whether you have a good conscience towards God! whether thou art indeed a Christian,

living and acting according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

And you that have peace in your own mind, enjoying a good conscience, O prize your privilege, and keep yourselves in the love of God by constant faith, by prayer, and purity! O beware, that the hell of a guilty conscience no more has place in your breast! Flee all desires that war against your soul. The more you are enlightened, the more tender will your conscience be, and the more abundantly will your peace flow and spread like a river all over your soul. Abstain from all appearance of evil; keep close to Jesus; love him, and rejoice to do his will in all things: so shall you have the constant testimony of a good conscience, and be divinely assured that you please God.

III. Now, supposing we have this unfeigned faith, and a good conscience, there will follow of necessity a pure heart, of which, in the third place, it has been proposed to speak.

The heart, in Scripture, frequently includes all the faculties of the soul and passions of the mind, the understanding, will, and affections; desire, hope, fear, joy, love, hatred, &c.; and to have these purified, implies their deliverance from the abuse and corruption in which our folly and sin had involved them. This purification begins with the illumination of our mind, is carried on by the continual assistance of the grace of God, has various degrees, and is accomplished by the blood of Christ continually cleansing us from all sin. O blessed are the pure in heart! for they shall see God.

Whoever has received the forgiveness of sins, having

faith unfeigned, producing a good conscience, is inwardly sanctified, renewed in the spirit of his mind, and transformed into the image of God by the Spirit of the Lord which dwelleth in him. Man's heart is evil by nature, and desperately wicked. (Jer. xvii. 9.) It is a sink of uncleanness, and harbours within it a mystery of iniquity; whatever is unjust, impure, unholy, and unhappy, are all hid and bred in the fallen soul of a sinner. It is true, many are ignorant of the total corruption of their nature, and thence imagine they have a good heart. They boast of their good nature, amiable dispositions, and praiseworthy qualities, at the same time that their inward parts are very wickedness, and the stream of their affections far from God. The law, in the length and breadth of its signification, having never entered into their soul, sinners are fast asleep, and remain so till the voice of God awakens them: then they cry, "We are all unclean, unclean. O wretched creatures! O miserable sinners!" The heart of man being thus corrupt, and altogether abominable; full of pride, lust, anger, covetousness, hypocrisy, impatience, and unbelief; it is plain enough, that it has need of the purification of the grace of God, in order to its happiness and salvation.

One sees that all the parts of Christian salvation depend upon each other; purity on pardon, pardon on faith, a good conscience on both, and love, pure love, the result of all. "A pure heart penetrates heaven and hell." The enlightened understanding perceives the things of God. Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, shining into the soul, enables the purified believer to apprehend the things of God clearly: he approves things that are excellent, and endures as seeing the

Invisible. The will of him that has a pure heart is sanctified, and made subject to the will of God: such a one only desires heavenly things; he desires holiness, hopes for heaven, loves God, hates all and every spot of impurity, and would be pure as God himself is pure; he mourns for every coming short which he feels, rejoices in what the Lord hath done for his soul, and still reaches forth to the things that are before. The whole bent of his heart is towards Jesus Christ, and the flow of his affections towards the remembrance of his name. Jesus is the soul of his soul, the life of his life, the centre of his bliss, and the source of all his goodness. Thus, all “old things are done away; and, behold, all things are become new” and pure. Christ, being formed in the heart, sits as a refiner’s fire, and as fullers’ soap, to cleanse the soul from all filth, of every kind and degree; till, being an entire new lump, there remains no spot in it, and Christ pronounces, “Thou art all fair, my love, and there is no spot in thee.” Thus doth the purified soul become an habitation of God through his Spirit.

Now, briefly to apply this head also: and in doing this I would attend to two things especially; namely, 1st, The misery of such as are not pure in heart: 2d, The happiness of those whose hearts are purified by faith.

1. And how great is the misery of those who are not pure in heart! They cannot see God, they cannot enter into life. (Rev. xxi.) I beseech you to consider this: see if thy heart be right, be pure in the sight of God: know that if you harbour any iniquity in your heart, the Lord will not regard you. Even though you should pray, and use every means of grace; yet,

yielding to, or harbouring in your heart, even by connivance, sin of any kind, all your services are an abomination in the sight of God. You may have a fair reputation, your life may be somewhat regular, you may do many things, as did Herod; and yet share at last the fate of the unprofitable servant; and that because of harbouring a single sin, from which you will not part.

The fountain must be made good, else the streams will be for ever impure. The most splendid actions proceeding from a heart still in its natural corruption and impurity are of little avail in the sight of God. See then, O sinner, if thou art not a whited wall, a painted sepulchre, a self-deceiver; see the filth of thy heart, the abominations of thy soul! O take knowledge of the root of bitterness that is within thee, thy enmity against God, thy pride, hard-heartedness, and unbelief! Talk no more of the goodness of your heart; alas! it is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. The devil has possession of it; it is the very seat of antichrist; a house of all spiritual wickedness; and, what is worst of all, are you not blind and insensible of all this? Because "you say, We see, therefore your sin remaineth." (John ix. 41.)

You may say, perhaps, "But I will cleanse my heart; I will purge it from these things, so that they shall have no place in me." Would to God you were but truly intent on having this done! But, as for yourself, you can never do it; it is altogether out of your power. Can you bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Can you purify your own heart? As soon might you make a world: the Ethiopian may as soon change his skin, or the leopard his spots, as you, by your own

strength or wisdom, purge your heart from dead works to serve the living God. Humble thyself, thou poor helpless worm ! Think no more highly of thyself ; but acknowledge that thou art all unclean ; that thy inward parts are very wickedness ; that thy soul is dead, corrupt, and far gone from original righteousness.

Now call upon the Lord with all your strength. On the bended knees of your body, and with all humility of soul, beseech him to have mercy upon you, and to put away your sins from before the eyes of his glory, ask salvation in the name of Jesus ; seek redemption in his blood ; implore the Eternal Spirit to apply the merits of the all-sufficient Saviour to thy guilty soul, If you do this, and faint not, the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple : he will come and save you : he will circumcise your heart, and purge you from all your uncleannesses : you will then be pure in heart, and enjoy the peace of God.

2. As for the happiness of such as have their hearts purified by the blood of Christ, it surpasses all the description of man. No tongue can express the blessedness of those who have a clean heart, and a right spirit renewed within them. They have communion with God in this world ; they see the Invisible ; they are born from above, and created anew in Christ Jesus ; they can draw near to God with great confidence ; the eyes of their soul are clear, the darkness is passed away, and the true light shines constantly upon them. The will, being sanctified and brought under the government of the Holy Spirit, quietly and thankfully does and suffers the will of God. The whole soul of such an one is freed from the turbulent passions of pride, lust, anger, revenge, envy, vain glory, and sen-

suality ; is freed from anxiety, fear, and despair ; and he sweetly and quietly passes the time of his sojourning here below. The faculties of his soul, who is pure in heart, are all harmoniously intent upon glorifying God. There are no contrary passions to disturb the repose of the heart ; but all is serene, deliberate, and fixed. The pure soul walks with God, sees him in all things, and blesses him for every dispensation. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, the portion of those who are pure in heart. They see God ; they are happy in him ; they shall dwell safely, and be quiet from fear of evil. Christ, who is in them, will establish his kingdom in their souls, and abide with them for ever.

O God, who can express, who can comprehend, the felicity of the pure in heart, when mortality is swallowed up of life ! Then shall they see God as he is : (1 John iii. 2 :) they shall behold his face in righteousness, and be for ever with the Lord : Christ shall be their light, and God their glory. There will then be no night of ignorance, sin, temptation, or affliction ; sorrow and sighing will be for ever done away ; they shall dwell in the holy blaze of God's presence for ever ; the Lamb will lead them to fountains of water ; and God will wipe away all tears from their eyes. This is the inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for the pure in heart.

IV. I come, in the last place, to speak of love, the end of the commandment.

“ By name to come call'd Charity, the soul
Of all the rest.” *

* Paradise Lost.

Love existed from all eternity: God is love. Faith, hope, and love make up the whole of religion on earth; love alone endureth for ever. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are all love; the angels, those sons of light, are love; the saints in paradise are love; man in his first and best estate was love: the love and goodness of God were stamped upon him. In this the image of God chiefly consisted. God made man in the image of his love; and the new creation of man consists in his restoration to this love, image, or likeness of God.

Very excellent things are spoken of faith and hope throughout the holy Scriptures. They are needful and precious gifts of God. Faith is called the gift of God. (Eph. ii. 8, 9.) St. Peter says, it is precious. (2 Pet. i. 1.) Hope is called the anchor of the soul, and the helmet of salvation; and by it we are said to be saved. (Heb. vi.; Rom. viii.; Eph. vi.) Yet love is the chiefest or greatest; it is preferred to faith and hope. Love in all things hath the pre-eminence. It is holiness and heaven. Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. Love is the fulfilling of all the commandments: it is without fear, and exceeding strong. He that loveth, with a pure heart fervently, hath no other God but **JEHOVAH**. He knows him, and loves him, his name, nature, and service. He cleaves unto him with all his soul, esteems his favour, seeks his image, and obeys his commandments; and, because he loves his God and Saviour, he fears, with filial awe, lest he should offend him in any thing, either in heart or in life. He rejoices to do his will; he is ready at the beck of Jesus; his Lord saith "Come," and he cometh; "Go," and he goeth; "Do this," and he

doeth it cheerfully. The language of such a heart is, "Here am I, Lord; do with me what seemeth thee good. Lord, thou knowest that I love thee; thou art my father, my joy, and my portion for ever. I love thee in mine inmost soul; I delight to do thy will; yea, thy law is written within my heart." O love, how pleasant, how desirable art thou for delights! Let me love thee, O my God! Dispossess my heart of all other loves. Wipe away with thy blood the remembrance of every other passion, and fill the whole capacity of my soul with pure and holy love to thee. 'This, this is the end of the commandment,—religion, contained in one word,—love!

O my beloved, what is it that prevents our love of God? It is easier to love than to know or describe; therefore, in loving him, we both labour less and serve him more. And why should our curiosity lead us after a knowledge which is impossible for us to arrive at whilst we neglect the means? for we shall never know God, nor the works of his creation, till we love him. Come then, let us follow after love; let us live for this one thing. And may the God of love shed it abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost given unto us! May he unite us all in this one spirit of love; so shall we prove in earth, in paradise, in heaven, our all in all is LOVE.

THE POURING OUT OF THE HOLY GHOST UPON THE APOSTLES.

DISCOURSE VII.

ACTS II. 4.

“AND THEY WERE ALL FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST.”

ALL the promises of God, in Christ Jesus are yea and amen. The promises of Christ are also sure and certain: his word stands fast for ever. Accordingly, we have in this chapter, an account of the fulfilment of that promise, (John xiv. 16,) “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.” The disciples were obedient to our Saviour’s injunction, Luke xxiv. 49: they waited for the promise of the Father. “And on the day of Pentecost they were all with one accord in one place; and suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting, and there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of

fire; and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost; and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Thus was the Spirit poured down from on high; the fire of divine love, of sanctification, and true wisdom, filled every heart. The unction of the Holy One was given to teach them all things necessary, to make them able ministers of the New Testament, and faithful witnesses of the resurrection, glorification, and powers of the Lord Jesus. Formerly our Lord breathed upon them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" (John xx. 22;) but now he comes like a mighty rushing wind, which may intimate the exceeding abundance of the Holy Spirit's influence under the Gospel dispensation; for, as a rushing mighty wind far exceeds a gentle breathing, so do the grace and knowledge given to Christian believers far surpass that which was given to the Israel of God before life and immortality were brought to light by the Gospel.

In order to our further improvement of this passage, I intend, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit of whom I speak, to show,

I. That the Apostles were inspired of God.

II. For what ends they were so inspired.

III. That the gift of the Holy Ghost was not confined to the early ages of the church; but that the promise is to us also, and to our children, and to all that are afar off.

IV. And, lastly, I shall draw a few inferences, and apply the whole.

I. That the Apostles were endued with supernatural gifts, I believe hardly any one will deny. There is, therefore, the less occasion to say much by way of

proof of it : the plain account which the sacred historian gives of it is all we need attend to. “ And,” saith he, “ they began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Accordingly, the whole multitude was amazed, Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, &c., heard the Apostles speak in their own tongues (respectively) the wonderful works of God. Here is, then, a cloud of witnesses out of every nation under heaven, that these simple men spake as never men spake before. It cannot be supposed that this whole multitude of different nations, interests, and religions were all the friends of the Apostles, or that they would bear a false testimony in their favour : on the contrary, some of them profanely cried out, “ These men are full of new wine.” But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and showed that this was the work of the Spirit, spoken of by the prophet Joel : (Chap. ii. 28, 29 :) “ And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh ; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy : and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit, saith the Lord.”

II. The ends for which the Apostles were filled with the Holy Ghost may be considered more particularly.

1. And first, they needed it for their own salvation. Without the Spirit of Christ they could be none of his. (Rom. viii.) They needed the Spirit of adoption to testify that they were the children of God. Their hearts had been filled with doubts, and fears, and sorrow. (John xiv.) It was therefore expedient the Comforter should come to assure them of the favour and protection of God and their Lord Jesus Christ.

They were justified, and in favour with God, while Christ was upon earth; (John xv. 3;) yet they had not so strong and comfortable assurance of the love of God, and of their title to eternal life, till afterwards. They were men of like passions with us, and equally needed the illumination and sanctifying graces of the Holy Ghost to qualify them for heaven. The Spirit took of the things of Christ, his wisdom, righteousness, and purifying grace, and showed and applied them to their hearts; and thus they received power to become the sons of God.

2. Afflictions awaited the Apostles wherever they came. They were afflicted, persecuted, tormented to such a degree, that they must have utterly fainted had not the Holy Ghost inwardly strengthened and encouraged them. The whole world and the devil being against them, they needed a fortitude and such consolation as he alone could give. But,

3. The Holy Ghost was plentifully poured upon the Apostles for the work of the ministry, for the edification of the body of Christ. It was by him they were led into all truth, discerned the deep things of God, and rightly delivered and divided the word of life. The Spirit of wisdom resting upon them enabled them to deliver such wonderful and mysterious things concerning Christ and the kingdom of God as the New Testament abounds with. Briefly, the Apostles needed, and the Holy Ghost was given to them: (1.) As a Spirit of adoption in their hearts, to assure them that they were heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ; to fill them with love, both to God and man, and to sanctify them throughout in soul, body, and spirit: (2.) To enable them to stand against the opposition they met

with from men and evil spirits: But thirdly, and chiefly, (as the more signal operations of the divine Spirit,) to qualify them for their apostolic function, “for obedience to the faith among all nations.” (Rom. i. 5.)

III. I am, in the third place, to show, that the gift of the Holy Ghost was not confined to the early ages of the church, but is the privilege of every Christian to the end of the world.

1. “I,” saith the Lord, “will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.” That to Abraham and his seed the promises were made, no one that believes the Bible will deny. And who are his seed but the faithful? The children of faith are the children of promise; even all that walk in the steps of faithful Abraham to the end of the world.

2. “In the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood, and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” Now, St. John teacheth us, that our Lord spake this of the Spirit, which they that should believe in Christ should receive: they that believe in him, without any limitation or restriction. All believers in Christ are, therefore, partakers of the Holy Ghost.

3. The words of St. Peter, in the 39th verse of this chapter, are too obvious to be denied. “The promise,” saith he, “is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off; even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” Whosoever is justified, being brought out of darkness into God’s marvellous light, and thus called unto the fellowship of his dear Son, is a partaker of, yea, a temple of, the Holy Ghost. We

have then the sure word of prophecy to ascertain us, that every believer, or true Christian, is inspired of God.

4. The necessity of divine inspiration appears still further from the very nature of the work of God. The eternal Truth himself declares, that "except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John iii. 5.) Of whatever nation, party, or profession a man may be, unless he is enlightened and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into life, but is dead, and the wrath of God abideth upon him. For "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;" he is not a Christian, is not in the way of salvation. (Rom. viii. 9.) Indeed, how can a man be born of the Spirit, unless he dwells and operates in his heart?

5. Besides, have we not the same God, the same Mediator, and the same spiritual worship to observe as they of old had? Why then should not we receive the Holy Ghost, even as they? We know that God is no respecter of persons, but that whoso feareth and serveth him, in whatever time or nation, shall be accepted of him and saved. Christ is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever: therefore, he doth not leave his people comfortless, but fills them with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Neither is there any change of dispensation in the divine economy; but whoever would acceptably worship the Father, must do it at all times "in spirit and in truth;" that is, with knowledge and love.

6. Further: it was absolutely necessary for sinners of the Gentiles to receive the Holy Ghost, to make them the children of God and heirs of the kingdom of

heaven. And are we better than they? Alas! we need only look around upon the baptized pleasure-takers, formal professors of religion, drunkards, liars, sabbath-breakers, and covetous persons, perhaps of our own neighbourhood, to give an answer. We are also the children of wrath even as they: "the Scripture hath concluded all under sin." (Gal. iii. 22.) Were they blind and ignorant? (Eph. iv. 18.) So are we. (Rom. iii. 23.) Were they proud, covetous, unclean, despisers of those that are good? So are we. (2 Tim. iii.) Our will is as perverse, our understanding as blind, our hearts as desperately wicked as any of the Gentiles mentioned Acts x. Since "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," (Heb. xii. 14,) and there can be no true holiness otherwise than as it is wrought in us by the Holy Spirit of God, it is evident that we must have the Spirit of Christ to inspire and purify our hearts. On the whole, therefore, we conclude that all true believers in Christ are partakers of the Holy Ghost.

IV. It remains that we draw a few inferences, and make some application: and

1. First, from the Apostles being inspired, we infer that our religion is of divine original. Our faith does not stand in the wisdom or devices of man, but in the wisdom and power of God. The first propagators of it were plentifully endued with divine grace, were signally blessed and favoured with an extraordinary measure of divine wisdom, holiness, and truth.

2. We may hence, from the miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost, take notice of the adorable wisdom of our Lord's dispensations. Sin, that is, the wickedness of the builders of Babel, had brought confusion

into the language of men ; but now the Lord makes use (so bringing good out of evil) of this very thing to magnify his name, and be an undeniable testimony for his Son, as well as of conveying the Gospel to all nations under heaven.

One may here just take notice of the error of the Church of Rome in allowing her ministers to speak to the people in an unknown tongue. Now that God was about to make known his designs of mercy to all mankind, he gave the gift of tongues to illiterate men, in order to their speaking to the edification and comfort of every one that heard them. It is plain enough, that many members of the Church of Rome are as ignorant of the doctrine of Christ as Jews or Heathens, and that, because the key of knowledge is kept from them, that is, the Bible ; and because they are taught to pray in an unknown tongue ; so that whatever fervency there may be in their spirit, the understanding is unfruitful.

3. It may be farther observed, that, in order to be truly qualified for preaching the word to others, one ought to be truly converted himself. Thus Christ, after he commissioned his disciples to preach "repentance and remission of sins in his name," adds, "And ye are witnesses of these things ;" (Luke xxiv. 47, 48;) that is, ye are witnesses, not only of what Jesus did and taught, but ye know by experience, what it is to repent and have remission of sins ; you shall, therefore, speak the things that you know, that you have tasted, handled, and seen. Indeed, it can hardly be thought that Christ would send any one to preach in his name that knows him not, and much less (as too many now do) deny his Godhead, and the full merits of his pas-

sion. The Apostles were commanded to wait at Jerusalem till they were endued with power from on high, that is, as the event showed, till they were made partakers of the Holy Ghost. In like manner, Christ would have none preach his Gospel who are not themselves partakers of his Spirit.

How else, indeed, can a man be sound in the faith? Is it not affirmed, that “the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God?” How else can a minister be mighty in the true meaning of the Scriptures? And without this, how shall he be able to confound gainsayers, and lead the people in the right way? If the blind lead the blind must not both fall into the ditch? Alas! the understanding of Homer and Horace can avail little if the heart be destitute of divine love and spiritual wisdom. The vain philosophy of this world can no more make an able minister of the spirit, than the east wind can satisfy the cravings of a hungry belly. O how much, and yet how little, knowledge is there in the world! How much striving is there about words and opinions; crying up of sects and parties, to the neglect of justice, mercy, faith, and the love of God!

O where shall we find the true, living, and holy ministers of the Lord Jesus?—men full of faith, zeal, purity, and love, who account not their lives dear unto themselves, so they may but finish their course with joy, and fully discharge the trust committed to them by the Lord Jesus? Where are the men that night and day labour to open the eyes of the blind, and to turn sinners from the power of Satan unto God? Are not the people perishing for lack of knowledge? Has not the wolf, the devil, scattered them? For

the hireling fleeth, and leaveth the souls for whom Christ died a prey to sin and Satan.

4. But not only the ministers of the Gospel, but likewise all Christians, must seek to be possessed of the Spirit of Christ. We have seen that God hath promised his Spirit to all flesh; and that all true believers in Christ do actually enjoy this Spirit in their hearts. May the Lord even now open your understanding, that you may see your calling! Lift up your hearts to the Lord: whoever among you lacketh wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth liberally to all, even abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness.

O be encouraged! the Lord is no respecter of persons: he hath promised to pour down water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. O that the heavens may now pour down righteousness! O that the Comforter may now descend into every waiting longing heart! Lord Jesus, remember us! Thou art now in thy kingdom; O pray the Father in our behalf! We are orphans, we are comfortless till we taste the good word, and are made partakers of the Holy Ghost.

Dearly beloved, cry mightily to God till you receive the Spirit of adoption, and know the things that are freely given you of God. Let no man deceive nor spoil you through vain philosophy; regard not those who scoffingly cry out against the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, saying, "It might be expected in the primitive days, when Christianity was in its infancy; but to look for it now is all enthusiasm." Regard them not: you must be inspired or perish everlastingly. The thoughts of your heart must be cleansed; you must have understanding in the things of God, by the Holy Spirit's

working, and shining into your soul. Without this living principle, actuating your heart, and influencing your tempers and conduct, you are dead while you live. O be not mockers of God! Offer no longer the sacrifice of those fools who, even while they pray, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from us," neither believe they have him, nor expect to receive him. Only ask, and you shall receive this heavenly guest. For so hath the Lord said, "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke xi. 13.)

And you that are in Christ partakers of the Holy Ghost, and possessed of his holy fruit, O stop not short of the complete accomplishment of all the great and precious promises! In good earnest beseech the Lord to sprinkle clean water upon you, and to save you from all your uncleannesses. Plead the promises of sanctification. You know this is the will of God concerning you, that you should be holy, and without blame before him in love. You know, nothing unholy can enter into the kingdom of heaven. We must have the mind in us that was also in Christ Jesus, if we would be for ever with him. Does the Holy Spirit *now* bear witness with your heart? Does he assure thee, that thou art a child of God? Is he as a fountain of living water springing up in thy soul unto everlasting life? Know that hereunto thou art called. O live and walk in the Spirit continually! We are the sons of God no longer than we are led by him.

And now, O Lord, let there be a noise and a shaking among the dry bones; the sinners that are yet in their grave of nature's ignorance and death! Send now the

Holy Spirit, to open the eyes of the blind, to raise the dead, to comfort all that mourn, to restore the fallen, to confirm the faithful, and to supply all our wants according to thy riches in glory by Christ Jesus!

A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE LORD'S
SUPPER.

DISCOURSE VIII.

1 COR. XI. 28.

“LET A MAN EXAMINE HIMSELF, AND SO LET HIM EAT OF THAT
BREAD, AND DRINK OF THAT CUP.”

BUT how should a man, every man, examine himself before he eats of that bread and drinks of that cup? What are the things especially concerning which people ought to examine themselves, on this occasion? One should at least inquire,

I. Do I understand who is the author or institutor of this ordinance?

II. Wherefore was it instituted? And,

III. Am I qualified to eat this bread, and drink of this cup? Have I those dispositions and qualifications necessary to make me a worthy partaker of the Lord's Supper?

Search me, and try me, O Lord! thou only knowest what is in man. O remove from before the eyes of

thy glory whatsoever is wrong in me! Give me, O give me, I beseech thee, such suitable dispositions for approaching thy table, that I may truly partake of whatever blessings were ever intended to be conveyed to any soul in this ordinance; and may truly serve all the purposes of commemoration, worship, and love, which were meant to be continued, promoted, and increased by this mysterious institution!

I. As to the author or institutor of this ordinance, be it known to us, that he is no other than the mighty God. (Isaiah ix. 6; Jer. xxiii. 6; John xi; Rom. ix. 5.) Indeed, to whom else doth it appertain, to constitute laws or institutions of perpetual obligation, as is this of the Lord's Supper, to all Christians? Our Saviour never used that phrase, so frequent with the Prophets, "Thus saith the Lord," being himself both Lord and Christ; one with the Father; God over all, blessed for ever! And, as such, he gives us this new commandment, "Do this in remembrance of me."

2. He is also the Son of man. He is both God and man. "God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds: and man, of the substance of his mother, born into the world: perfect God, and perfect man; of a reasonable soul and flesh subsisting." He is the Messiah, the Anointed of God, spoken of Gen. iii. 15; Psalm ii; Dan. ix; Acts iv. By the blood of his cross we are reconciled to God. (Col. i.) There is no other name under heaven whereby we can be saved. He is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. By him alone come to the Father.

3. He is the resurrection and the life. All power in heaven and in earth is committed unto him. The

disposal of all events, and the management of all affairs among the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth, are in the hands of Jesus; the institutor of this ordinance; the author and the finisher of our whole salvation. Judgment is likewise committed unto him, "for that he also is the Son of man." By him shall the state of all flesh be finally determined. His, "Go, ye cursed," or "Come, ye blessed," will fix, unalterably fix, the eternal condition of every child of Adam. So much, at least, should every one understand concerning the author of this ordinance, before he presume to eat of that bread and drink of that cup.

II. But ought not one to inquire, in the second place, in order rightly to understand it, "Wherefore was this ordinance appointed? What is the nature of it?" And there needs not a deal of application, to understand this point; the Scripture is so short and yet so express on the head. The Lord's Supper, then, was instituted by Christ to keep up a continual remembrance of his death and passion; of all he both did and suffered for us sinners, and for the salvation of every one of us. "Do this," saith he, "in remembrance of me." And saith St. Paul, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come:" as though he had said, "Let this be a standing memorial to you of the person and benefits of the Messiah; him who died for our sins, and was raised again for our justification."

The paschal lamb was ordained to be a memorial of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt. (Exod. xii.) God appointed a lamb to be killed, dressed, and eaten,

at a certain season, and in a certain manner, once every year; which still renewed in them a sense of their extreme misery under Pharaoh, and his task-masters, from which the mercy and power of God delivered them.

In like manner, God manifest in the flesh, (the true Passover and Lamb of God typified by that of old,) being ready to offer up himself for the sins of the world, appointed and commanded his followers, to the end of the world, to eat of this bread, and drink of this cup; that thereby due remembrance may be made by us of the love and mercy of our dying Saviour; who by his blood-shedding hath redeemed us from a bondage infinitely worse than that of Israel in Egypt: namely, from sin, and wrath, and endless ruin. And it is not only as a means of keeping these things in memory, that the Lord's Supper was appointed; but likewise to convey to all those who duly receive it, the grace and benefits purchased by all which our Lord both did and suffered.

The reason of his death, and the benefits which we receive thereby, should, in a peculiar manner, be attended to in our observance of this command. As to the former, the reason of our Lord's death, it looks back to the first formation of all things. When God created the heavens and the earth, and all the hosts of them, he made man in his own image; his body out of the dust of the ground; his soul a divine spirit, which God breathed into him. Man was then an image of his Creator's goodness, wisdom, holiness, and immortality. He was made lord of the visible creation, had all things put into his power, and for his use. One prohibition alone it seemed good to his Creator

to appoint; namely, that of the fruit of the tree, which was in the midst of the garden, he should not eat. And this the Lord forbid under pain of death: "For," said he to Adam, "in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Man did, however, eat thereof; and by his disobedience incurred the punishment threatened to his sin. He ate, and died! The light and life of God within him instantly departed; his body thence became mortal, and both his body and soul obnoxious to eternal death; an everlasting separation from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

And in Adam we all have sinned, and died. His punishment became ours also. He was a common head; and we, his posterity, must necessarily share in his weal or woe. Thus guilty, corrupt, helpless, and undone, man must have perished everlastingly, had it not been for the whole process of the mysterious affair represented in the Lord's Supper,—the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and intercession of the Lord Jesus. "He died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." He "died for *our* sins, according to the Scriptures." This we should remember, whenever we approach his table: and we should endeavour to do it with sentiments of shame, and love, and gratitude, and astonishment! My God for *me* resigned his breath!

As to the benefits which we receive thereby, they are many and various:—1. Illumination: He sends us the Holy Ghost, to be our instructor, comforter, and guide. 2. We are justified by his blood: (Rom. v:) through faith in his name, we receive the remission of our sins. 3. He hath purchased, received, and con-

fers gifts, treasures of grace, upon his members: 4. By his word and Spirit we are sanctified: His blood cleanseth from all sin. He alters the whole state of our inward man, and makes us entirely new creatures. 5. In a word, he prepares us for, and receives us to, his eternal glory! All holiness, and all happiness, flow to us from the Lord Jesus. And to all these things, he makes this ordinance singularly subservient. These things we should deeply and constantly remember.

The broken bread, and the cup of blessing, very fitly represent the graces communicated to us in this ordinance: for, as bread strengthens man's body, and wine cheers his heart, so do the body and blood of Christ, "verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper," strengthen, comfort, and cheer the soul. Discerning herein the Lord's body, and waiting as at the foot of his cross to receive from his open wounds those streams of dying, ransoming love, it cannot be but we shall receive some measure of righteousness, comfort, strength, and holiness thereby. We are nourished with the "living bread" that came down from heaven; we are comforted with the "water of life" that makes glad the city of God: "My flesh," saith Christ, "is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed!" And whoso eateth his flesh, and drinketh his blood, hath eternal life abiding in him.

III. Who, in the last place, it may be inquired, ought to partake of this ordinance? What are the dispositions and qualifications necessary to eat of this bread, and drink of this cup? And here I shall not

enter into a minute or critical consideration of the point, but simply give my opinion.

1. And first: All true believers in Christ, those who have the remission of their sins and are at peace with God, should undoubtedly come and partake of this ordinance: these should come in a peculiar manner. How indeed can they forget the price that was paid for their redemption? And where can they remember it with such circumstances of lively representation as at the table of the Lord, where the bread broken, and the wine poured out, set forth the crucified body, and streaming blood of their dying Saviour? Believers do discern the Lord's body! They look through the sign to the thing signified, and by faith hold communion with their Lord.

If it should be said, "But what need have believers to receive the Lord's Supper, in whose heart Christ, the hope of glory, already resides?" the answer is, 1. Because the Lord hath commanded it: he saith to all his followers, indiscriminately, "Do this in remembrance of me." Believers are under a law to Christ, and rejoice that they are so. They desire to be obedient in all things. And by this royal law, they are bound to show forth the Lord's death till he come.

Besides, they have still need of Christ, and cannot stand a moment without him. And, whither should they go, but to him? Who else hath the words of eternal life? And, how should they come to him, but in the ways his wisdom and goodness have made choice of?

No one has received such a measure of grace, or arrived to such a degree of union and communion with

God, but he may still attain more, and increase to the perfect day. We cannot indeed fully enjoy Christ in this life. For although "we behold," as saith St. Paul, "with open face, the glory of the Lord;" yet it is but "through a glass, darkly." The Lord's Supper may be considered as one of those glasses through which believers discern the Invisible!

Our Lord's primitive disciples, even those who on the day of Pentecost received the remission of their sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, thought not themselves above the need, or free from the obligation, of receiving the Lord's Supper. On the contrary, they broke bread at home daily, and from house to house; even the commemorative bread of their Saviour's passion.

At this ordinance the souls of the faithful are greatly strengthened. They receive some additional degrees of humility, strength, comfort, and establishment in the grace of God. Humiliation is here increased; backslidings are healed; evidences for heaven are here cleared up; love to God and all mankind is both increased and inflamed. Christ is often so present at this feast, that the souls of the disciples burn within them, and are sick of love!

2. But it is not only those whose sins are forgiven, and know they are at peace with God, that ought to come to the Lord's Supper: all awakened, penitent sinners should likewise come. Every one that seeks redemption in the blood of Jesus Christ, even the forgiveness of sins, should, by all means, eat of this bread, and drink of this cup.

Have they a deep sense of their original and actual sin and wickedness? Do they feel that by nature

they are children of wrath, and deserve the vengeance of eternal fire? Have they a measure of godly sorrow, inward grief, for having offended so good, so gracious a God, and thus destroying their own souls? Do they now cease to do evil, and learn to do well? Have they forsaken sin, and turned to God, in the use of the means of grace? Do they hunger and thirst after righteousness, even the righteousness and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ; accounting all things as dung and dross, in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord?

Is this thy character, O thou poor, dejected, disconsolate one? And fearest thou to approach the Lord's table, lest, coming unworthily, as thou sayest, thou shouldest eat and drink thy own damnation? O fear not! Thou art the very person whom Christ invites, and to whom he would have told, "All things are ready, come to the marriage." "Come unto me," saith your Lord, "all ye that are weary, and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Let not the enemy keep you any longer from partaking of the provision of your Lord's house. O come and "eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness!" You want pardon and peace, power and purity: whither then should you go, but to the open wounds of your crucified God? Are not these the fountains opened to wash away your sin and unrighteousness? Say not, "I am unworthy, and unfit to come." Unworthy! Of what? Wouldest thou make thyself pure, and then come as a deserving guest to thy God? Alas! how greatly dost thou err! and with what excuses does the God of this world endeavour to keep thee from thy good! Why, if thou

hadst all the righteousness, strength, and comeliness of the whole human race, to recommend thee to God for thy justification, it would be reputed of him no better than the offering of swine's blood, or the cutting off a dog's neck. Thou art, and ever wilt be, undeserving of the least favour from God. But in the Son of his love the Father is well pleased; and, through Him, with all that believe in Jesus. You are therefore to approach God with no other motive or plea to excite his pity and obtain his favour, than that you are a poor, guilty, abominable creature, in yourself; and seek for all you want, only in and through the righteousness and blood of his dear Son. And thus, pleading only the satisfaction of Jesus, you are, of all people, an acceptable guest, and shall be helped and saved. O yes! every awakened, desirous soul, is invited of God to come to his table: and who dares forbid it?

Lastly: Whosoever, being called by the name of Christ, desires to be saved, and, in token thereof, heartily endeavours to abstain from all evil, and to use, as opportunity and strength allow, every means of grace; who believe all the articles of the Christian faith, and endeavour to conform themselves thereto; all such may come to the Lord's Supper; they are entitled to the privilege, and under the obligation of Christ's command to "do this" in remembrance of him: it being an acknowledgment of their subjection to him as their Creator, Redeemer, Lord, and Judge; and of their desire and hope to receive grace and glory from him alone.

How many instances are there of persons, who have come to the Lord's Supper, cold and heartless, fearful

and disconsolate ; who, while they have waited before the Lord on the occasion, or in the very article of receiving, have been quickened, strengthened, and comforted ! How are convictions increased and deepened at this ordinance, as well as penitents justified, and believers built up in their most holy faith ! Whatever, then, thy degree of conviction may be ; however conscious thou art of unfitness, and full of fears lest thou shouldest rather hurt than help thy soul by receiving these symbols of our Lord's passion, know, that if it be thy determined purpose to serve God entirely, and if thou resolvest and strivest against every sin of every kind, the Lord invites thee to his table, poor and helpless as thou art, and will by no means cast thee out.

With regard indeed to all such as “ profess to know God, but in works deny him, being abominable, disobedient, and to every good work reprobate ;” who are called by “ the name of Christ,” but do not “ depart from iniquity ;” yea all who allow themselves in the known practice of any one sin ; they ought not, at their peril, to come to the Lord's Supper. Such trample, as it were, under foot the blood of the Son of God, and put him to an open shame. They offer indignity to his sacrifice, and provoke the Lord to plague them with divers diseases, and sundry kinds of death.

Christ can have no communion with Belial. Thou canst not be a partaker of the Lord's table and of the table of devils. No, sinner : by choosing sin, and not departing from iniquity, thou renouncest thy Saviour ! O repent ! Wash ye truly, and make ye clean. “ Put away from before mine eyes,” saith the Lord, “ the evil of your doings. Cease to do evil ; learn to

do well." Then draw near to your God ; and " let us reason together," saith the Lord : " Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land. But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured. The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

In reality, that which renders a person unfit to receive the Lord's Supper, hinders his profiting by any other Christian ordinance ; that is, any one sin knowingly and deliberately indulged. The prayers, fastings, and readings of such are no other than an abomination to the Lord. And although, from the special penalty annexed to the profanation of the Lord's Supper, its superior excellence and divinely mysterious nature may be reasonably inferred, nevertheless, it cannot be proved from Scripture, that any persons are forbidden to come to it, save such as live in the practice of some sin. And for the same reason, for one sin indulged, the whole of a man's religious performances are lighter than vanity in the sight of God.

Let a man then, every man, examine himself, before he eats of that bread, and drinks of that cup. Let him inquire, Do I know the author and end of this feast ? Am I fit to eat of this bread, and drink of this cup ? Can I discern herein the Lord's body ? Do I behold Christ, as crucified for me ?—*my* sins laid upon him ? And do I seek to be healed by his stripes and wounds alone ? Do I endeavour, at these seasons to consider, and dwell particularly upon the reason why our Lord suffered ? what he suffered ? and the benefits I receive thereby ? Jesus saith, " This is my blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins."

And have you yet found the remission of your sins? or are you seeking this gift from God? Have you forsaken every sin by the grace of God? Do you mourn because of your sins? And do you hunger and thirst after righteousness? Does your soul cry out for God, the living God?

Attend to these things, all ye that mean to partake of the Lord's Supper. Repent you truly of your sins. Mourn over, confess, and forsake them. Implore the forgiveness of them all. Devote yourselves entirely to him, whose passion you here present to God. Keep thyself from idols. Go, consecrate your whole body and soul to this Prince of purity, and King of saints. Vow allegiance and perpetual obedience to him. Thus come to the Supper of the Lamb, to this feast of the Great King! and hear Jesus saying, "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." Yet a little while, and you shall drink the new wine, with him, in the kingdom of your Father!

THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD.

DISCOURSE IX.

EPHESIANS VI. 11.

“PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD.”

“WE wrestle not against flesh and blood” only, “but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places.” Therefore we need to “put on the whole armour of God,” that we “may be able to stand in the evil day,” and resist all “the wiles of the devil.” St. Paul, who gives this counsel, was conscious of its importance; for, having had “a thorn in the flesh,” and having “fought with beasts at Ephesus,” he was well experienced in spiritual combats, and able to instruct his converts, how to resist and overcome their ghostly enemies. Therefore, with the boldness of a General at the head of his army, he addresses the Ephesians, and fills their hearts with divine courage. “Finally, bre-

thren," says he, "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might: put on the whole armour of God;" and immediately gives a particular description of the parts whereof this divine armour is composed: and,

I. Let "your loins" be "girt about with truth."

II. Put on "the breast-plate of righteousness."

III. Let "your feet" be "shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace."

IV. Above all, take "the shield of faith,"

V. "The helmet of salvation," and,

VI. "The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

VII. And exercise this armour by "praying always with all prayer in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance."

In discoursing on these words, I shall, by the divine assistance, keep close to the Apostle's account of the armour of God, and speak of each particular separately. But I premise, that few persons will like my exposition of the text, save such as have some spiritual light and life from the Lord Jesus. The words of St. Paul, and the interpretation of them, are spirit and life; and therefore can only be relished by those that have their senses,—that is, their understanding, will, and affections,—exercised to discern spiritual good and evil. They contain some of the mysteries of the kingdom of God, some of the parts of that Gospel which is hid from them that obstinately perish. Let him, therefore, that is able, receive these sayings. And thou, Lord, inspire my heart! so shall my tongue be "as the pen of a ready writer."

I. And first: Let "your loins be girt about with truth." For God requireth truth in the inward parts,

and sincerity in "the hidden man of the heart:" without a "true heart," a man cannot please God; the word of God lives and grows only in such as are upright in his sight. (Luke viii. 17.) A soldier should have a strong and sure girdle to bind on his armour, that it may be both safe and convenient: even so, the man that is listed under Christ's banner, and goes forth to fight the Lord's battles, must have truth rooted in his heart, zeal towards God, faithfulness and love to his heavenly country, and a real regard for his own soul.

He that would go into the field to resist the devil, overcome the world, and mortify the flesh, should first sit down and count the cost, and see whether he is able to encounter so many powerful enemies. If he finds in his heart that he is willing to sell all for Christ, and to count all things but dung that he may win Christ, then he may confidently face all his enemies; for every true-hearted Nathanael, who is willing to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, shall be certainly and graciously supported by Him, who is a sun and a shield to all those that are upright of heart.

But if a man engages in the fight of faith without simplicity and godly sincerity, though he may hold out for a time, he will surely fall at last: because he has no root in himself, no deep humility, no true broken-heartedness, no sound sincerity; he will either fly like a coward, or be shamefully overcome by Satan. A man shall be tried as by fire; every spring of his profession, every motion of his heart, will be examined by the God of truth; therefore, he had need to be sound in the faith, to have salt in himself. Christ calls himself "the Truth;" (John xiv. 6;) and, in-

deed, it is He only that infuses and works truth in the heart of man by his Spirit. Let your "loins be girt about with truth" means, then, Let your eye be single, forsake all for Christ, renounce your own will, and truly endeavour to do the will of God.

II. Secondly: "Put on the breast-plate of righteousness:" for sincerity alone will not bring a man to heaven; he must be righteous as well as sincere; the gates will be opened only to the righteous generation that keep the truth. (Isa. xxvi. 2.) This must be the breast-plate; it must guard the heart. But what is this righteousness, whereby a man sets his face as a flint, and with boldness faces all his enemies? I answer, This righteousness is twofold, imputed and imparted.

1. It must be imputed: for you must know that all men being guilty before God, and utterly incapable to help themselves, and the justice of God requiring a complete satisfaction for their sins, the Son of God (O wonderful!) "bowed the heavens;" came down, took upon him human nature, and, after living a perfectly righteous and meritorious life, suffered a most painful and shameful death; and this he did "for us men and for our salvation," insomuch that God is now reconciled to every man who does but repent and believe the Gospel: that is, on account of what Jesus Christ, the most blessed Son of God, did and suffered, God does fully and freely forgive every one that believes in Christ.

We are told, (Rom. iv.,) that "faith is imputed to us for righteousness," because it apprehends and applies the merits of Jesus Christ to our souls; it lays hold on his righteousness, and makes it over to the

needy and helpless sinner; for, as it was Adam's sin, not our own personal transgression, that drove us out of paradise, and robbed us of God's favour and image, even so it is the righteousness of Christ, not our own personal holiness, that brings us again to God's favour. (This is largely explained Rom. v.; 2 Cor. v. 18.) Without this righteousness a man must perish; none other will justify before God. If a man has not this, he is exposed to the wrath of God, the condemnation of the law, and the accusation of the devil. No covering will do but the glorious and rich robe of Christ's righteousness; and this is freely received by faith.

This breast-plate will defy the devil with all his hosts; this armour will enable the Christian soldier to stand firm against all assaults of the enemy; this will keep his heart alive: when he has "put on Christ," his naked soul is clothed. (Isaiah lxi. 10; Ezek. xvi.; Matt. xxii. 11, and Luke xv. 22.) Few understand this; the natural man cannot discern this work of the Spirit, as he is not convinced of righteousness. Men wise in their own eyes will not assent to this truth, that "we are saved by grace, justified by faith," accepted of God, for what Jesus Christ did and suffered: and yet, till a man understands this, he is ignorant of the first principles of the oracles of God. This is the door of salvation, the rock on which our faith is built; namely, that we are counted righteous before God through faith in Christ. O, this is a precious truth! God be praised that it is revealed to us! (Isa. xlv. 24, 25; Jer. xxiii. 6; Luke xv.; 1 Cor. i. 30; 2 Cor. v. 21, and Rev. iii. 18.) But though it is so fully declared by the Prophets and Apostles, yet, who believes the Prophets and Apostles? Who does

not go about to establish his own righteousness, being ignorant of the righteousness which is of God by faith? And who experimentally knows that a man is justified freely, and that his sins are forgiven, only through faith in the blood of Christ?

2. Righteousness must be impressed or imparted: for imputed righteousness alone will not qualify us for heaven. We must be holy, really holy in ourselves, though not from ourselves. When God made a new covenant with his people, he promised not only to forgive their sins, but also to "write his law in their hearts." (Jer. xxxi. 33; Heb. viii. 10.) This is peculiarly fulfilled under the Gospel. When Christ imputes his righteousness to us, he frees us from the guilt and immediate power of sin; but when he imparts his righteousness, he sanctifies our nature. The former is apprehended by faith, and the latter is wrought in us by the Holy Ghost. The former is represented by the atoning blood, and the latter by the purifying water, that flowed from Christ's side.

The "breastplate of righteousness" must, then, be real and inherent; the soul must be cleansed and the conscience purged from all dead works: for "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And this new birth is a mighty, universal, divine change: it does not only imply remission of sins, but likewise the total sanctification of our nature, and the transformation of our heart. Many are willing to have Christ's righteousness imputed to them, but have little thought of having it implanted in them. Hereby we have an infallible rule to try any man's sincerity: whosoever is really desirous to be saved, does as much hunger and thirst after holiness as after remission of

sins. He has a hatred to all sin ; he cannot abide it ; and he is grieved at the least imperfection he sees in his obedience. He does not desire deliverance from sin barely because he is afraid it will send him to hell ; but because he sees it is a most abominable thing, contrary to God's pure essence and most holy law.

The soul that is truly enlightened is so far from despising the law of God, that it sees as great beauty and worth in it as David expresses in Psalms xix. and cxix. And St. Paul,—who most fully and diligently shows that the moral law does no more justify a man, that is, procure the pardon of his sins, than the ceremonial law,—is yet careful to show the excellency and use of the law, and how it is established through faith ; insisting that grace saves us only as it delivers us from the curse and nature of sin, and makes us “ holy and unblamable before God.” As that faith which does not work by love is a dead, devilish faith, so that righteousness that does not reach and cleanse the heart is nothing worth before God. Notwithstanding all that Jesus Christ did and suffered, no man will be finally saved who is not made truly holy.

To cavil at this is to oppose a truth clearly revealed in the Bible. He that would have Christ for a Saviour, must take him for a Prophet, King, and Lord. Believers are not “ without law to God, but under the law to Christ.” The people of God are holy ; they walk in the way that is called holy, and they thirst after and labour for holiness ; their souls are ever longing for more of the mind of Christ, more of the image of God. They do not always remain in the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, but they

go on to perfection ; they grow and are daily changed into the glorious likeness of their living Head. You see, then, what this impenetrable breastplate is : righteousness imputed and implanted. These two are necessary : God has joined them together ; let no man dare to put them asunder. Thus,

“ Let faith and love combine
 To guard your valiant breast ;
 The plate be righteousness divine,
 Imputed and impress'd.”

III. Thirdly: Let “ your feet be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.” The Christian soldier must put on sandals ; for the way to Zion is a rough and thorny way. The Apostle here alludes to an ancient custom of soldiers, who, being apprized of the enemy’s approach, prepared pieces of boards, and drove nails through them, and strewed them in the way, that the enemy might be hurt and hindered from marching ; and if the children of this world are thus wise, how much more of this cunning hath the old serpent, who is both the devil and Satan ? He strews the way with all kinds of fire-brands, arrows, and death. The poor Christian soldier is always in an enemy’s country : he is going through the land of pits, and of thick darkness, and of the shadow of death ; therefore should his “ feet be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.”

1. This implies the patience of the saints. Every one that lists under Christ’s banner has need of patience to run the race that is set before him. A man must be resolute, strong, and dexterous, to be able to walk upright before God. When the prodigal returns to

his father, the father puts shoes upon his feet ; that is, God endues his saints, his justified people, with patience and much strength. Many think it is an easy matter to go to heaven ; but, alas ! these are novices in religion ; they have never made a step towards heaven ; they know nothing of the difficulties that the people of God meet with. Believers are often scorched with fiery temptations ; for, through much tribulation they must enter the kingdom of God, and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. And truly, this is hard work, to follow the Lord through evil report, through poverty and pain ; but if our feet are shod, we shall walk and not faint, we shall run and not be weary.

2. Secondly : The feet being shod, implies a holy conversation : “ He that is washed,” saith Christ, “ needs not to be washed, except his feet.” The feet are the instruments of motion, and may signify the outward conversation. When it is said that Enoch and Noah “ walked with God,” does it not mean that these men were righteous in their generation ? And is it not by the same figure that David saith, “ I turned my feet to keep thy testimonies ?”

3. Thirdly : It means a willingness to spread abroad the glad tidings of salvation. (See Isa. lii. 7.) “ How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of them that bring good tidings, that publish peace, and say unto Zion, Thy God reigneth !” There must be a willingness, not only in the ministers, but also in every private Christian, to spread abroad the Gospel. The inhabitants of one city should go to another, saying, “ Come, let us go to pray before the Lord speedily.” All that have “ tasted that the Lord is gracious,” will certainly invite others to come and see his goodness.

God's people have great zeal for his glory, desire to have his name honoured, and labour that sinners may be converted and saints built up. Hereby is God glorified, when all that profess to know his name bring forth much fruit. Indeed, this is hard and unthankful labour to many; for when the people of God begin to reprove sinners, and bear witness against the world that "its deeds are evil," they will surely be hated and despised. Here then, again, they have need to have their feet shod, that they may go through the fire of persecution, and not be burned; for, though the Gospel is a Gospel of peace, wicked men, opposing it, make it the cause of great tumults. See then, O Christian soldier, that "your feet be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace!"

" Ruin is spread beneath :
 The Gospel greaves put on ;
 And safe, through all the snares of death,
 To life eternal run ! "

IV. Fourthly: The Christian soldier must, "above all," take "the shield of faith;" for by this he must "quench" all "the fiery darts of the wicked one." Excellent things are spoken of faith; it is that through which we are saved; (Mark xvi. 16;) by it we are justified; (Rom. v. 1;) by it we are sanctified; (Acts xxvi. 18;) by it we overcome the world; (1 John v. 5;) by it we are born of God. (Job i. 12, 13.) Finally, we "stand by faith," we "walk by faith," we "have peace and joy in believing." Since then, "above all," we must take "the shield of faith," let us consider, 1. What this faith is: 2. How we attain it: 3. How

we may know that we have it: 4. What use we are to make of it when we have attained it.

1. What is this faith? I answer, faith in general is an assent and consent to that proposition, that "God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." More particularly, it is a steadfast assent and consent to the truths of God, revealed in the Old and New Testament. But Christian faith implies much more than this. Faith in Christ as the Messiah, faith in God through Christ, is a divine principle in the soul through the Spirit; or a divine power communicated to the soul, whereby it is enabled to apprehend the righteousness of Jesus Christ, or Christ himself, with all his benefits; taking him for "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." Faith, in short, is such a receiving of or relying upon Christ, as entitles a man to all the blessings of the new covenant: it is "the gift of God" by the Holy Spirit.

2. How is this faith attained? I answer, "Faith comes by hearing." (Rom. x.) Wherever the pure word of God is powerfully preached, the people that seriously and reverently attend it receive this "gift of God;" though generally they receive it soonest who have the deepest remorse and soundest humiliation. God honours still the word of his servants, and by it "turns the disobedient to the wisdom of the just;" inasmuch that those who were before blasphemers, liars, covetous, idolatrous, &c., become faithful and holy men. The Gospel is not an empty sound: it is the "power of God," and "the wisdom of God," working salvation in the souls of rebellious sinners.

Again: As other gifts are attained by prayer, so is

this. It is true, men are generally convinced of their want of faith by the public preaching of the Gospel; but often they receive living, justifying faith, while they are wrestling with God in secret prayer, or reading the word of God, or meditating, or fasting, or communicating. God bestows this gift variously, on various persons, and often when they little expect it: when they are full of unbelief and fears, deep sorrow, and almost ready to conclude that God will never come, that they are left a prey to Satan, and that for their sins they must suffer the vengeance of eternal fire; this, their extremity, is God's opportunity.

3. How shall a man know that he has it? I answer, By its fruits he shall know it, for by these it will evidence itself, wherever it is. First, he that believeth hath remission of sins. (Acts xiii. 39.) He is fully and freely forgiven; all his past sins are blotted out, and all guilt is removed from his soul. Secondly, he that has faith, has "peace with God;" (Rom. v. 1;) a divine tranquillity, an inward calm in the soul, arising from a sense of reconciliation with God. Thirdly, he that believeth hath a new heart. (Acts xv. 9.) Faith purifies the heart; it renews the soul in righteousness; and by it, as an instrument, we are sanctified. (Acts xxvi. 18.) Fourthly, he that hath the Christian faith overcomes the world; (1 John v. 5;) that is, he overcomes "the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life."

Now, it is impossible for a man to have this mighty change wrought in him, and not to be sensible of it. When he believes, he has joy and peace; he loves God, and has power over sin. Faith brings light and life into the soul, and raises a man above the world. It gives

him strength to stand, feet to walk, and wings to fly! It brings liberty and glorious rest to the soul: if it did not, it would not be the faith "that justifies the ungodly;" (Rom. iv. 5;) the faith that opens the spiritual senses of the inward man; the faith that sees God, and hears him; that tastes him, and rejoices in his salvation; in a word, the faith which is "the substance of things hoped for," and "the evidence of things not seen."

4. But what use are we to make of this faith? I answer, Thereby we must quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one: he has a quiver full of them, and shoots his arrows and firebrands at the children of God; so that a child of God must resist and quench the poisoned darts in the blood of Christ. Faith makes the devil tremble, it drives him away, he is a mere coward; when he grapples with a man that has the shield of faith, he flies away; the word of faith wounds his head, retorts all his darts upon himself, and makes him bite his chains. O yes!

" If faith surround our heart,
Satan shall be subdued;
Repell'd his every fiery dart,
And quench'd with Jesu's blood."

Again: He that believes, should rely upon God in all things. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," said faithful Job. Highly art thou to be commended, thou servant of God: it was nobly said. Whom else, indeed, shouldest thou trust in, but in Him "who has eternal life," and "can save to the uttermost." God deals with men according to their faith; those who believe and rely much upon God, re-

ceive extraordinary gifts and assistances from him. When we have high and excellent conceptions of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, when we see the riches of the grace of Christ, and how all-sufficient his righteousness and merits are, we then can confide much in God and in Christ, and are continually blessed by him. But if we have low conceptions of God's goodness and providence, and cannot see the greatness and preciousness of Christ's sacrifice, we live in a low, miserable condition; or, rather, our life is a lingering death.

Faith is a powerful thing: it gives action to the soul, and makes it strong. The Christian should, then, use his faith, not only to resist the devil, with all his temptations, but also to draw near to God, and to derive righteousness and strength from Jesus Christ. Faith goes to him for all things, and by him overcomes all. What is impossible to praying and persevering faith? O that there were more of this faith in the world! How soon would sin and misery fly before it! How soon would an everlasting righteousness be brought into our souls!

V. Fifthly: He that would be more than conqueror must "take the helmet of salvation:" this means, the hope of the Gospel. It serves as a headpiece, and covers the Christian soldier in the day of battle.

There is a hope before justification, and a hope after: that which is before is an expectation a man hath, that if he waits upon God in his appointed ways, he will, for Christ's sake, forgive all his sins, and make him a child of light; and the hope that is after justification is, a sure expectation that God will bestow all the good things of his kingdom upon such as he ap-

proves for his children. A man that is filled therewith expects and patiently waits for the great salvation of God ; for holiness, for perfect love, for heaven ; and this hope supports his soul in the time of trial, yea, makes him rejoice in the midst of adversity.

But, to speak of the nature of hope more fully : 1st, It is called an “ anchor of the soul ;” (Heb. vi. ;) because, as an anchor keeps the ship “ when the winds blow and the rains descend,” so hope keeps the soul calm and steadfast in the midst of temptations and persecutions. Hope looks for good things to come. “ It is true,” saith the soul, “ I am at sea, and the storm is high ; but I have ‘ cast my anchor within the veil,’ and I shall be brought at last to the haven where I would be.”

2. Hope is said to purify the heart. (1 John iii. 3.) O the expectation of seeing “ Jesus as he is,” and of sitting down with him in glory ! This stirs up his spirit, and makes the Christian soldier active as fire ; and not only so, but likewise creates an aversion in his soul to every sin, so that he cleanseth himself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit.

3. It is said, “ We are saved by hope ;” (Rom. viii. ;) saved from all present afflictions and sorrow. “ It is true,” saith the hoping soul, “ I am oppressed and tried ; but the Lord will quickly come, and I shall sit with him on his throne. All this tribulation and anguish shall not separate me from my God.” Hope, as a helmet, covers his head : it lifts him up when he is ready to sink. When the devil and the world beat on the head of the righteous, their helmet defends them ; for hope is patient, and patience overcomes all difficulties.

'There is a difference between faith and hope : faith looks at things past and to come ; hope only regards those that are to come. Secondly, faith looks to good and evil things ; but hope only regards " good things to come." A Christian hopes for perfect love, for all the image of God, for the crown of righteousness, and for the glory of the world to come. O blessed hope, and full of immortality ! Happy is the man that hath the God of Jacob for his God, and whose hope is in the Lord his God !

There is, indeed, such a thing as " the hope of the hypocrite," which will perish with the possessors of it. Men remain in carnal security, and yet hope that God will have mercy upon them at the last. Alas, poor wretched deceivers, how miserably are they mistaken ! When they come to die, how do " all their thoughts perish ?" Ask them to " give a reason for the hope that is in them ;" and they will tell you, that God is merciful, and that they are not as others, and a thousand such things. St. John spoke in another manner, and by another spirit, when he said, " Now, beloved, are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." This is the hope that maketh not ashamed ; because where such a hope is, the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given to those who believe, and whose hope is in the Lord their God.

VI. Sixthly : The soldier of Christ should take unto him " the sword of the Spirit," that is, " the word of God." The word of God is taken in a twofold sense

in Scripture. 1. Christ, the Son of God, is called the Word. (John i. 14.) 2. The Holy Scriptures are called the word of God. (1 Cor. ii. 1.) It is in this latter sense we are to understand the expression here. All that is written in the Old and New Testament “ was written for our learning ;” it was inspired “ of God, and is” therefore “ profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness ; that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.)

The word of God is of sovereign use to all who desire to keep the devil at arm’s length, and to stand against all his wiles. It is no wonder, then, that the devil hath so much power where the word of God is not regarded. But why is it called “ the sword of the Spirit ?” I answer, first, because the Spirit applies the word, yea, the very written word, “ to convince the world of sin.” We find St. Peter, in the four first chapters of the Acts, citing continually passages out of the Old Testament, to convince the Jews of their guilt for murdering the Son of God. Yes, the “ word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, of the joints and marrow ; and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart :” (Heb. iv. 12 ;) “ the law of the Lord converteth the soul ;” (Ps. xix. :) and the Gospel “ is the power of God unto salvation.” (Rom. i. 16.) When the Spirit sends home the word unto the conscience, it alarms, awakens, wounds the soul, and pierces the heart with many sorrows ; therefore, we always find most of the workings of God’s Spirit where the word is purely, simply, and powerfully preached.

There is a divine energy in the word of God: it is mighty to humble the soul and to overturn the devil's kingdom. The sword that proceeds out of the mouth of Christ is a cutting sword: it wounds to the quick, and makes the sinner cry out, "What must I do to be saved?" St. Paul knew the terror of the Lord, and, therefore, persuaded men "to flee from the wrath to come." Belshazzer trembled, his heart fainted in his body when the hand wrote upon the wall, and the writing was applied by the power of God. It was the Spirit writing bitter things against him; and the Almighty shooting his arrows, and making them stick fast in his heart.

There has been wonderful efficacy discovered in the word of God; yea, some have been astonished at reading or hearing one sentence of the Bible. Not that the letter itself can reach the heart thus; no, it must be the Spirit applying it. Let a sword be never so sharp and strong, yet it doth not wound, except it be wielded by some hand. So it is with the written word. It is but a dead letter till it is wielded, as it were, in the hand of the Spirit: then it doeth execution; it slays its thousands, as it did on the day of Pentecost. (Acts ii. 36.) Thus, when all human eloquence fails, the word of God overcomes the most stubborn heart.

Secondly, and more properly, it signifies here, the word, as exercised and applied, to resist the devil. Our Lord made this use of it, Matt. iv. By citing and applying the written word, he foiled the devil and drove him away. Satan, indeed, rehearsed Scripture too; but he applied it wrong, and to his own confusion. He has often the impudence and cunning to this day to cite the word of God, in order to deceive and overcome

the children of God. The Christian soldier, therefore, should be skilful in the word, that he may be able, on every occasion, to wound that "accuser of the brethren," and to keep him off. Sometimes he will tempt us to presumption; and if that fails, he will tempt us to despair. But as our Lord did, so should we continually answer him with, "It is written," &c.

Yea, the word of the Lord should be our defence against the world, and all its smiles and frowns. We shall meet with many enemies in our way to Zion; but we must "stand in the" good "old way," search the Scriptures, and go forth by the footsteps of the flock. When men or devils rise up against the saints, they may call to remembrance that they were told beforehand what they were called to suffer. And if, when they are under reproach or persecution, when they are in poverty or pain, they consider the sufferings of the Prophets, Apostles, and holy men that have been from the beginning of the world, it will not be long before they receive courage, strength, and comfort. The word of God furnishes a man to "every good word and work," as well as to patience. There is no state of life in which the Holy Scriptures are not useful: in prosperity and high-mindedness, to humble us; in adversity, to comfort us; in sin, to reprove us; and in the way of holiness, to encourage us.

When Stephen discoursed out of the Holy Scriptures, his enemies were not able to answer him. The study of Holy Writ is well worthy the application of the greatest wits. We may easily suppose that a book that comes from the infinitely wise and good God must be all perfection: there are no blots, no empty sophistry in it: the word of the Lord is tried, and it is

sure ; and although a man may see an end of other perfection in this world, yet the commandments of God are exceeding broad, and the word of our Lord standeth fast for ever.

As for those who pretend to a revelation from God above or different from that which is already given, they are not taught of God : there is no need “ to add to the words of the prophecy of this book.” Indeed, a man must have a revelation from the Holy Spirit ; but it is to understand what is already written. For all things necessary to our salvation are revealed ; and we are called, not to add to the oracles of God, but to read and meditate therein day and night ; begging continually that the Lord would open our understandings to know the Scriptures, and fill our hearts with courage and wisdom, to make a right use of that divine sword till we are more than conquerors.

“ Brandish in faith, till then,
 The Spirit's two-edged sword ;
 Hew all the snares of fiends and men
 In pieces with the word :
 ‘ 'Tis written, ’—this applied
 Baffles all strength and art ;
 Spirit and soul with this divide,
 And joints and marrow part ! ”

VII. Seventhly: I now come to the exercise of the “ whole armour,” that is, “ praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, for all saints, and watching thereunto with all perseverance.” And certainly, watching and prayer are highly necessary. Without this a man can neither obtain nor preserve any part of the divine armour : this brightens every grace of the Spirit, and mightily prevails with God against

sin and Satan. Here are many notable expressions made use of by the Apostle: every word is full: the sentence is vastly significant. Let us, then, a little consider some of the Spirit's meaning in these words; and in order to this, O Holy Ghost, inspire my heart! Suggest holy and profitable matter to my soul!

And first: Prayer and supplication must be made "in the Spirit;" that is, as St. Jude expresses it, "praying in" or "by the Holy Ghost." For without this inspiration and assistance of God, no man can pray acceptably. It is the Spirit that helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession in us according to the will of God. It is the Holy Ghost that suggests matter of prayer and supplication to us: he opens the understanding, subdues the will, melts the heart, warms the affections, and makes way for the soul to approach God.

Those that suppose they can pray fervently or faithfully enough by their own natural reason, or by the assistance of men or books, are under a mistake with regard to the nature of prayer. Indeed, reason and every other help should be used; yet we may assure ourselves, that the man who has never prayed but in the language of another, never prayed according to the will of God. No man can rightly and faithfully call on God, till the Lord by his Spirit has convinced him of his various necessities. Many ignorant souls do not know what to ask of God: though they want every thing, yet they can pray for nothing. They may then use the language of David or Simeon; but this they do by rote, as children say their lesson. A man may use a form of prayer; but he that would never make his request known to God without it, wants the

spirit of prayer, as much as Bartimeus wanted the sight of his eyes.

Whenever we pray, we should ask of God the spirit of prayer. It is one of the promises made before the gospel times, that believers should receive the Spirit of grace and supplication. (Zech. xii. 10.) When David was convinced of sin, he prayed from the heart. (Psalms li. and cxxx.) So could Jonah in the fish's belly, where he had neither book nor candle-light. The word of God requires that we should pray and not faint; that we should pray every where. (Luke xvii.; 1 Thess. v. 17; 1 Tim. ii. 8.) Surely all this cannot be understood of reading prayers; no, it must mean the prayer of the spirit, the principle within, the constant aspiring after God, the holy longings and fervent breathings of a pious soul. It is then a most certain truth, that no man can pray agreeably to the will of God till he receives the Spirit of Christ to help his infirmities, and to quicken his soul; for prayer is nothing else but the soul's speaking to God. It is the very breath of faith; therefore, it is as natural to a real Christian to call upon God as it is to breathe.

Secondly: We must "pray always," and "continue in supplications." Some think they pray sufficiently, if they repeat a form of prayer once or twice a week, or, at most, twice a day: they suppose this will suffice, and that they have discharged their duty well enough. But those that are taught of God know otherwise: there is neither time nor place in which they find not desires and necessity to pray. They have set and solemn hours for public and secret prayer: they often retire from the world to dress their souls, and to trim their lamps; but they endeavour to be always in the

spirit of prayer. They consider themselves as in the presence of God; and, accordingly, lift up their hearts to him, and hold divine communion with him. A Christian prays without ceasing; for he lives and walks in the Spirit, and is always in a praying frame. There is a divine propensity in a holy soul to draw near to God; there is a constant cry in a Christian's heart; for he knows that God constantly listens to the silent wishes, and sees the internal travel, of his soul.

Thirdly: We must "pray with all prayer;"—all kinds of prayer; public, private, secret; prayer for ourselves, prayer for others; especially prayer for all Christian ministers, and all saints. Those who only pray in public, cannot profit in virtue, because they pray not in secret; and secret prayer will not avail, except public worship be added to it, where it may. Those that pray only for themselves, neglecting others, and the prosperity of Sion, cannot prosper. The love of Christ constrains the saints to intreat and to make intercession for the brethren. We find Abraham, the friend of God, praying even for Sodom, (Gen. xviii.,) and Moses praying for Israel, with extraordinary zeal and affection. (Exod. xxxii.) How faithfully does St. Paul pray for the Philippians, (ch. i. 3, &c.,) and for all other churches where he had laboured; without excepting those who had not seen his face in the flesh! (Col. ii. 1.) The Christian's heart is open to embrace all men with hearty affection; he prays for the same blessings for others, as for himself; he remembers that exhortation in 1 Tim. ii. 1, and prays for "all men," lifting up every where holy hands without wrath or doubting.

The fourth particular signified by this verse is,

that the Christian soldier should join watching to prayer; and these two are commonly put together. What can be more necessary for a soldier, than to watch; especially when he is in the camp, or engaged in the field of battle? Upon earth the whole life of man is a warfare! He has enemies always to watch against, and to fight with: he should therefore be always awake; his soul should be full of eyes, before and behind, within and without, to be able to discern every approach of the enemy.

Those who desire to be conquerors, and expect a crown of glory, must watch as well as pray. When we rise from our tables, the devil does not cease tempting us. Wherever we are, or whatever we are doing, Satan is at our right hand; and a thousand other outward and inward foes. Sleepy, indolent souls, are not fit for God's service. The servants of God, the great and almighty King, must be expert in the spiritual war, and always have their eyes fixed on every corner where they suspect the enemy will appear.

If a man should pray many hours in the day, and not watch all the time, he spends his strength in vain. If he neglects to watch one hour, Satan will overturn and destroy all he did the whole day. Alas, how many ignorant souls are deceived in this point! They suppose that having prayed an hour, that will guard them all the day; whereas, in the moment they give over their vigilance, Satan gets an advantage over them. Our loins should be girt, our lamps always burning, and we as those who wait every moment for the return of the bridegroom. "Watch and pray," saith the Son of God. If we would then "pray without

ceasing," we must watch without failing: these two stand or fall together.

Having thus enlarged upon the "armour of God," I shall now set down the whole military exhortation of St. Paul; and having called upon all to "put on the whole armour of God," I shall conclude with a few remarks and cautions.

The exhortation begins ver. 10, and continues to the 18th: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, whereby ye shall be able to quench all the darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, for all saints, and watching thereunto with all perseverance." And now, my brethren, suffer the word of exhortation, and apply what shall be said to your own souls.

I. First, then, "put on the whole armour of God!" This belongs to all; every soul is bound to hearken to this exhortation. The divine armour hath been laid before you: should you not all labour to put it

on? Let "your loins" then "be girt about with truth:" you know this is necessary: the God of truth expects and requires it from you. If truth be not rooted and grounded in your souls, all your religion is vain. God sees into all the secrets of your hearts. He knows every way of wickedness that is in you. You may deceive yourself or your neighbour; but, remember this, you cannot deceive God. He judgeth righteously, and knows whether your heart is upright before him. O buy the truth, and never, never sell it! Get this girdle; let it be about your loins constantly; and let it sink into your hearts. *

"Be not deceived, God is not mocked;" if you sow in righteousness, you shall reap in mercy. Remember Christ is "the truth;" get acquainted with him: he inspires truth, increases, accepts, and rewards it. Let the God of truth dwell in your hearts richly; let the Spirit of truth guide you; let the word of truth be in your mouth: and remember that no lie is of the truth. Be sincere in your heart, and in your conversation. If you are so, you will come to the light, that it may be manifest your works are wrought in God. (John iii. 21.) By manifestation of the truth, you will commend yourselves to every man's conscience. O let hypocrites, let the double-minded, remember this! —those who say unto Christ, "Lord, Lord," but "do not the things" he has commanded; who in words "profess that they know God, but in works deny him."

II. You must have on the "breastplate of righteousness." Put this on; that is, "put on the Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. xiii. 14.) You must have the covering of his Spirit, (Isa. xxx. 1,) or woe be to you! Put off your filthy garments, and be clothed with the Son,

of God. Come to him: he is "the Lord our Righteousness." (Jer. xxiii. 6.) If you say, "But may we not do without this righteousness? Have we not a righteousness of our own? Will not our moral righteousness and sincere obedience be accepted?" you talk like Heathens. What righteousness have you? Where is your armour wherein you trust? "O slow of heart to believe" what God hath spoken! Do you not know that you are under the curse, till Christ saves you from it? (Gal. iii. 10.) Why will you trust in a broken law to justify you? especially in a law that can show no mercy? You are a poor, miserable, guilty, helpless, unworthy wretch. Know this, and humble yourself before God! Tremble at his feet; confess that you have no righteousness of your own; and beseech him to cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

Get on the "white raiment," the "righteousness of saints:" never imagine you can be righteous, till your sins are forgiven you. You must be "ungodly" till you are "justified." (Rom. iv. 5.) Seek then an interest in Christ. He was "made sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (2 Cor. v. 21.) Make haste; submit to the righteousness of God; put no more confidence in the flesh; come out of yourself; throw yourself on Christ; hide yourself no longer in your "filthy rags;" but put on change of raiment. O if you do not put on this breast-plate, I declare to you, that God will shoot his arrows at you! he will pierce your heart with his anger! If thou sayest, "I will not have Christ's righteousness," God will say, "I will have no mercy upon thee." If you say, you will not have Christ for your Saviour; God says, you must have the devil for

your father. Sinner, do not stand it out against Christ! Come in: while mercy is offered, O accept it! Perhaps you will reply, "But I have an interest in Christ; I know he has imputed his righteousness to me." And have you the law of righteousness written in your heart? You must not think to be saved except you are made holy. I mean, the Lord will not finally save you without holiness. Indeed, before your sins were forgiven, you was a guilty, corrupt creature; but assure yourself, that you must be holy as God is holy, and pure as God is pure, before you can enter into the kingdom of heaven. Do not think like Antinomians, that all your righteousness is in Christ; that is, that we are never to be made righteous in ourselves. Indeed, all our righteousness is through and from Christ; yet we must be righteous, really righteous in ourselves, or we cannot see the kingdom of God. Christ is not a complete Saviour to us, till he purifies and sanctifies our souls and bodies.

The Gospel requires as great degrees of holiness as ever the law did. "The pure in heart" only "shall see God." Be you then conformable to your righteous Lord. He hath given you an example: O follow his steps! Walk as he walked, in holiness and righteousness all your days. If you love Christ, keep his commandments. Obey his Gospel; walk according to his royal law; take him for your King and God! Love him, please him, praise him! It shall be well with the righteous, saith the Lord. (Isaiah iii. 10.) Ye righteous generation, God will have you in everlasting remembrance. Ye that keep the truth, lift up your heads: the gates of the New Jerusalem will be opened for you! O blessed are ye that are righteous! He will

highly exalt you, and give you a name above every title of honour this world can afford. Follow "righteousness and mercy;" and you shall find "life, righteousness, and honour." (Prov. xxi. 21.)

III. "Let your feet be shod," &c. Be patient, courageous, and ready to every good work. You have need of patience; you will be tried as by fire: therefore "be strengthened with" all "might in the inner man;" have all patience, and long-suffering with joyfulness. Do not say, "I could bear any trial but this." Surely if you cannot bear what God himself appoints, you can bear nothing. Be ready to suffer all things from all men, and run patiently the race that is set before you. Let your feet be beautiful, and your conversation holy. Spread abroad the Gospel; be very zealous for the Lord of Hosts; have feet to run, and wings to fly, to do the will of God! You will meet with many a mountain, but, by the help of our God, shall leap over them all, and go on from strength to strength, till you finish your course with joy!

IV. "Above all," I exhort you to "take the shield of faith;" for without this you can do nothing. But, O beware of the false, dead faith, that destroys so many souls! Be sure your faith is the right, gospel faith. If you mistake in this, you will blunder all along. If your faith be false, so will all the other graces you seem to possess. "Examine" then "yourselves, whether ye be in the faith;" and whether your faith be rooted in your heart.

Remember the signs that follow those that believe. The Scriptures say they have forgiveness of sins; the Spirit of adoption; peace, joy, and love to God; power over sin, victory over the world; and all the

fruits of the Spirit. Has your faith this evidence of being the faith of the operation of God? Is it a shadow, or a substance?—an opinion in your head, or a true principle of life in your heart? Do you believe in word and opinion only; or have you in your heart the powerful faith of God's children?

The devil will throw his fiery darts at you: O have faith to quench them in the blood of Christ! Have faith to withstand Satan! He will march towards you with all his malice, rage, and power: but have faith, and God will bruise him under your feet. Be also faithful to your God, and to your king; to your soul, and to your country. Be not faint-hearted; have courage; take your shield, and wield it. Drive the devil before you. Have faith in God, in God your Saviour, and all things shall be possible to you! Come, thou soldier of Christ, believe and live! Believe, and thou shalt see the glory of God! Believe, and out of weakness thou shalt be made strong! Believe, and thou shalt get a crown of righteousness! Above all, brethren, have faith working by love; and then you shall overcome all the devils, and sorrows, and sins that oppose you. Believe, and you shall be God's friend, like Abraham. Believe, and you shall be God's servant, like Moses. The time would fail to tell you all the power and efficacy of faith. It dries up the sea, and makes waters flow out of the rocks. It throws down walls, alters the nature of fire, stops the mouths of lions. O it is a precious jewel, a heavenly treasure! He that has faith, has Christ, with all his benefits,—grace, righteousness, liberty, joy, glory, and immortality!

V. The head should be covered in the day of battle.

“Take” therefore “the helmet,” hope; let this keep your head above water. Hope and wait for the salvation of God. Hope to be delivered from all sin and sorrow; hope to be filled with God, and perfected in love. Let your hope purify your heart, and be an anchor to your soul. Look up, your redemption draweth nigh! The time is at hand when you shall weep no more: behold, the open door of hope is before you. Hope for all good things to come; and though the Lord tarry, still wait upon him; he will not tarry long. The Lord is at hand, be steadfast therefore, and abound in the work of the Lord.

VI. “Take the sword of the Spirit.” Search the Scriptures. Meditate in God’s law. Be thoroughly furnished for every good word and work. Increase in the knowledge of God. O love the precious word of God! Do not perish for want of knowledge. Read and understand the sacred pages. Be mighty in the Scriptures; so shall you vanquish Satan, when he comes as a flood.

And here I would just hint, how you should use the gospel sword. Perhaps Satan may tell you, “God is so merciful, that he will not punish you, although you should commit”—such and such sins: answer, “The soul that sinneth, it shall surely die.” (Ezek. xviii. 20.) Again, if he tells you, “It is too late now, all is over, God will have no mercy upon you,” reply, “But ‘he keepeth mercy for thousands,’ (Exod. xxxiv.,) and ‘now is the day of salvation.’” Satan may again say, “But you have been a great, presumptuous sinner; God may save others; you he will not save:” answer to this, that “though your sins are as scarlet,”—of the deepest dye, and of the most aggravated nature,—yet

“the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.” (1 John i. 7.) The enemy will still urge, “But you are weak; you have no good in you:” answer, “Christ will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.” (Matt. xii.) Moreover, the tempter may suggest, “If you are a child of God, why does he deal so hardly with you? You are poor and afflicted, despised and forsaken:” answer, “God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven.” (James ii.) “Ay,” says Satan, “but I will have you yet; I have many fiery darts to throw at you: you may be zealous and firm for a season, but I will make you turn your back at last:” answer, “God is faithful, and has promised not to suffer me to be tempted above that I am able to bear, but will with the temptation make a way that I may escape.” (1 Cor. x. 13.)

The Spirit of God himself will teach you, brethren, how to make use of this sword, that you may cut all the snares of the enemy in pieces. I beseech you then to be versed in God’s holy book. O let the word of Christ dwell in you richly! Let it live and grow in you. It is “the ingrafted word,” the word of wisdom; it shows you what the Lord would have you to do, and what you are to expect from him. O dig therein for knowledge, as for hidden treasure; bring out of God’s treasury things new and old. So shall you be “perfect and entire, lacking nothing.”

VII. “Pray” in the Spirit “without ceasing,” &c. If you do not this, all your labour will be vain. You cannot stand fast in the faith, or grow in grace, unless you “continue instant in prayer.” Open your hearts and lay your wants before the Lord. O pray for the

Spirit of prayer, that you may make your requests known to him! Hitherto you have asked little in the name of Christ: now ask, and you shall receive, and your joy shall be full. But ask in faith, no way doubting that God is able to do this thing for you. The reason why you have not more love, joy, holiness, faith, is because you do not ask it of our Father who is in heaven. He knows that you have need of these things, and would freely give his Holy Spirit to you, if you did but "pray, and not faint."

Pray then for yourselves; "pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper who love her." Let the "care of all the churches" be on you also. Intercede with God for Sion; and, for her sake, do not hold your peace, but make intercession "with groanings which cannot be uttered." Pray for the grace you have not; pray for the continuance of what you have; pray for pardon and holiness; pray for your friends and your enemies. Pray "with all prayer;" pray every where; lifting up holy hands and pure hearts, without wrath towards man or doubting towards God. So shall your prayers be as incense, and the lifting up of your hands as the evening sacrifice. Lord, teach us, thy disciples, how to pray!

To conclude: Are you a minister of Christ, a preacher of righteousness? O then you, above all, have need of this armour! You are an officer in the army of the great King; you stand in the front of the battle; all the powers of hell are engaged against you especially. Many eyes are upon you;—the eye of God, expecting sincerity and faithfulness; the eyes of the world, watching over you for evil; the eyes of the children of God, looking for a more than ordinary degree of

holiness from you ; the eye of Satan, to see how he may tempt and destroy you. You are a mark for all to shoot at. See then that you “ put on the whole armour of God.” You are indeed a stripling going against Goliath ; but fear not, the armour of God differs from Saul’s armour : it does not take away, but gives, strength and activity, and makes the man of God “ valiant in fight.” But O take heed that whilst you are exhorting others to be valiant, you “ put on the Lord Jesus Christ” yourself ; that your own soul be not found naked ! Go not this warfare at your own charge : count the cost. See if you can meet the king and god of this world and all your foes. You will not be crowned except you strive lawfully. You are listed to be a soldier : do not then entangle yourself with the affairs of this life ; that you may please the Lord Jesus Christ, who is your Captain. O thou man of God, “ fight the good fight of faith,” and continually “ lay hold on eternal life !”

And you that believe, brethren, you that have on this armour, are you sure that you have on “ the *whole* armour of God ?” A part of it will not do. Indeed you can have no part of it truly without having the whole. And which part can you spare ? Do you not want truth and righteousness, patience and faith, hope and knowledge, and all prayer ? Can you say of any of these, “ I have no need of thee ?” No, no : if you break but one link of the chain, it holds you up no longer, and you fall as though all were broken. To have any part of this armour wanting will keep your soul destitute of the whole. Some pieces thereof indeed, as faith and prayer, we eminently want ; but all are necessary. Therefore, brethren,

“ Leave no unguarded place,
No weakness of the soul;
Take every virtue, every grace,
And fortify the whole.
Indissolubly join'd,
To battle all proceed;
And arm yourselves with all the mind
That was in Christ, your Head!”

Lastly: Remember there is no armour for the back. You have a girdle and a breastplate, sandals and a shield, a helmet and a sword; but with which of these can you cover your back? Go then straight forward: look not behind you: “remember Lot’s wife.” Be faithful, be constant, be courageous. To arms! Hear the word of command. Behold, the crown is ready for you. “Go up and possess the good land!” Live by your sword till you come to Zion; and there you shall learn war no more!

And now, brethren, I close this discourse, as St. Paul concluded his military exhortation:—Let me beseech you to pray for me, and for all the preachers of the Gospel, that a door of utterance may be opened to us; that with all boldness we may speak the mysteries of the kingdom of God; and that when we have fought the good fight, and bruised Satan and sin under our feet, an abundant entrance may be ministered unto us into the blessed mansions, where we shall all ascribe salvation to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever!

THE END.

